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THE MASTER CHIVALRY

By Margaret Lee

Author of "Divorce," "A Brighton Night," "Lorimer and Wife," etc.

I

IT was an interesting if not an unusual scene: a stretch of surf rolling in on a hot, white sand beach; a few detached bath-houses; groups of laughing bathers, and in the distance the spires and roofs of an old seaside town, one of many that dot the southern shore of Long Island.

A small boathouse afforded some shelter from the heat of a Summer afternoon, and in its shadow a man reclined, reading and smoking.

Occasionally he raised himself to shake his hand at some distant swimmer who was shouting to him an invitation to "come in." Sometimes he watched a group of girls that attracted general attention. Its members wore becoming bathing suits of black silk or wool. The sun turned their fair hair into golden crowns and glistened on their white arms as they clung to each other or the lifeline and disappeared in the foaming breakers.

The tallest of the group held some fascination for the man lounging on the shore. Her form was perfect, and her face was very beautiful, whether in repose or dimpled with merriment. She appeared to be leading her companions in frolic and daring, and more than once he closed his book to follow her graceful motions. At such times he would fall into a reverie, apparently not unpleasant, from which he roused himself, with some difficulty, to return to his book, a medical journal that

chronicled the latest triumphs of Æsculapian science. These were undoubtedly interesting, but the girl in the surf was obtrusively diverting, suggesting exquisite visions of classic lore that made him think the powers of traditional sirens and water nymphs had not been exaggerated.

It occurred to him to look at his watch. Yes, his leisure hour was past, devoted, as usual, to study. It was time to begin his afternoon calls on the patients who were still in danger. One of them, a child, was baffling him with its varying symptoms, and he thought of it as he rose, put his book in the deep pocket of his alpaca coat, and turned for a farewell glance at the laughing sirens.

The tallest and fairest of them was not visible, and at that moment a succession of appalling shrieks arose from her friends—shrieks of terror and appeals for help. All was commotion and confusion; bathers and spectators crowded about the weeping girls, who pointed to the great rocking billows that had suddenly carried away their companion.

"Can she swim?" "Where did you see her?" came the excited questions, that were met with half-incoherent answers. In the midst of the confusion, Dr. Barclay threw off his coat and shoes and plunged into the surf. Cheers followed him; after him, too, went several other swimmers, and the lifeboat, well manned. The excitement intensified. People hastened toward the town for other physicians; friends helped the fainting girls to the bathhouse and assisted

them to dress, and comforting voices arose in the crowd.

"Barclay will find her! He is a splendid swimmer. Now, don't give way so. See, the boat is near him, and everything is being done to save her."

Having gone some distance beyond the lifeline, Barclay descried the object of his search apparently being carried out to sea, too much exhausted to make any struggle in her own behalf.

He was a powerful young fellow, and an expert swimmer from early boyhood. In a marvelously short time he was beside the girl, supporting her in the waves.

"The boat will be here very soon, Miss Mowbray," he said, cheerfully. "If you prefer, I can take you in. Let me place your arms; now hold fast, and we are quite safe."

The girl's eyes were closed; for a few moments she clasped her hands as Barclay directed, and he turned toward the shore. He had made but a few strokes, however, when he felt the slight fingers open, and his fair burden sank from sight without a sound.

To dive and grasp her required only a moment; but as he rose with her and shouted toward the boat, the girl struggled to release herself from his firm hold—struggled in silence, desperately.

Amazed and horrified, Barclay dexterously caught the slender hands that repulsed him, pinioned them to her sides with his strong arm, and held her until the boat reached them. When they were assisted from the water he continued to support her in his arms. She seemed utterly exhausted. He gave a few sharp directions to the rowers, and they drove for the beach with all their strength. The crowd cheered wildly or wept for joy.

The beach gained, Dr. Barclay, assisted by another physician and Miss Mowbray's father, applied restoratives to the girl, and at last had the satisfaction of seeing that she was safe beyond any doubt; then he hurried homeward, walking, to avoid a chill.

He was accompanied by a knot of bystanders, all anxious to hear the particulars of the rescue.

Barclay made light of his share in the incident and expressed the opinion that the girl had been seized with cramp and carried out in the undertow.

This was a satisfactory explanation of the accident, and was generally accepted. The fame of Barclay's deed spread like the seeds of the dandelion, and for days little else was discussed in the town of Bayham. It was known that the Mowbray carriage had been seen at Mrs. Barclay's shabby little front gate, and that Mr. and Mrs. Mowbray had called in person to thank young Barclay for saving their daughter's life.

As fortune would have it, the doctor was abroad on his small round of visits when his callers arrived, so his mother received them in her old-fashioned square parlor, with its three-ply red ingrain carpet, its horse-hair furniture, its framed daguerreotypes, its vases of dried grains and pressed leaves, its odor of musk and its penetrating chill.

The visit proved an agreeable one. The Mowbrays were, naturally, cordial, and Mrs. Barclay, forgetting all preconceived opinions, sat and admired her visitors, and became enthusiastic concerning her absent son. They lingered, expecting him, but finally left without seeing him. However, his mother had proudly exhibited his office, which occupied a small wing to the left of the old frame house; and in the garden they had been introduced to an elderly man in blue overalls, who was pottering about the flower-beds with a rake as ancient as himself. This was Anthony Barclay, the owner of the homestead and the young doctor's paternal grandfather. He was far more interested in the caterpillars that were destroying his fine plants than in his daughter-in-law's elegant visitors. He had heard of his grandson's exploit, but the recital had not thrilled him. In the first place, he was in his sixties, and there are natures that

outlive emotion. Again, he could not fully realize what had occurred. The tragedy had been averted. Had Miss Mowbray been drowned, and had his grandson sacrificed himself in a vain attempt to save her, then he might have sat down to think over the event and its fine lessons. People who devote themselves to the prevention of evil have yet to be canonized.

Barclay returned tired and heated from his professional duties. He enjoyed the practice that the older physicians had outgrown; people who never sent for a doctor until fear prompted the call; people who never expected to pay a bill thus contracted; some who paid in produce, others who waited until their harvests were sold. However, young Barclay worked conscientiously and had no complaints. The Barclays had lived for generations in Bayham, and were not anticipating miracles. Occasionally, the young doctor considered the expediency of buying a good saddle-horse. He was contemplating the advantages of such an investment of his hard-earned money when he entered the gate. The open main door was an unusual sight, and as he stepped inside he saw that the parlor had been occupied. His mother had left the chairs at the calling angles, and she came, breathless with excitement, from the dining-room on the other side of the hall to tell him the great news.

"Dick, you'll never guess who has been here to see you!"

"Anybody I have to go to at once?"

"Oh, no—guess."

Barclay put his arm about his mother and kissed her, regarding her tenderly.

"They must have been very pleasant people, judging from your face. Your cheeks are pink and your eyes are positively sparkling. Oh, well, mother, out with it. I am too tired to think—"

"Mr. and Mrs. Mowbray."

"Is it possible!" Barclay's sensitive features quivered.

"I knew you would be surprised."

"I am." He sat down and looked

at his mother's smiling face. "They made you happy because they had something nice to say of me. Well, I am glad you had the pleasure of the visit."

"I suppose you'll return it, Dick?"

Barclay appeared puzzled.

"Did they leave me an invitation to call upon them?"

Mrs. Barclay grew a little confused, and flushed.

"No, I can't remember any distinct invitation, but, of course—why, wouldn't it be only polite to return a friendly visit? They were so warm. I showed them your pretty little office, and they admired your things."

"Oh, mother!"

"Yes, indeed! When they were going, your grandfather was in the garden, and he had a long chat with them about his rosebushes. I should think it would only be neighborly to keep up the acquaintance."

"Oh, well, mother, if they care to know us they will do the inviting, never fear." And a strange sadness came into his eyes.

II

For several days after the unexpected visit Mrs. Barclay lived in a state of pleasant excitement and anticipation. She imagined numberless agreeable incidents that might result from the one important event. No one of them transpired, but her disappointment was so gradual that it left no sign.

Bayham is a town consisting of a long main street stretching east and west, intersected at right angles by broad avenues that end at the ocean on the south. The Barclays' home-
stead was on the narrow main street at a convenient distance from the post office and small shops. The house was well built, roomy and comfortable, and its general air of shabbiness was due to the many opposing opinions of its occupants. The doctor would have had it taken down and replaced by a modern house, with all the new appliances for comfort and health. Mrs. Barclay would have had it repaired

and painted and partially refurnished. The owner thought it very well as it was. He had lived in it for over sixty years and was still hale and hearty. He had no faith in the methods for drainage that he saw in operation in many of the new houses that adorned the principal avenues. He scouted the idea of elaborate water facilities within four walls. Occasionally he put in a new board here and there, mended the fences and invested in some paint which he himself applied.

The Mowbrays owned a beautiful modern residence fronting on one of the principal avenues. It had stone porticos for wet or cold weather and broad wooden piazzas for sunny days. The atmosphere created by wealth and refinement radiated from its open windows and many doors. The family was a large one, and at times its members spent the Winter in New York, and again they would stay abroad for years in succession. They lived luxuriously on inherited wealth, and their presence in their own home was a positive benefit to the town. They entertained lavishly; attractive house guests succeeded each other, and their thorough enjoyment of life had its effects on the general sense of happiness and prosperity in the community.

The Mowbrays were always foremost in any plan that had for its object the welfare of Bayham. Already, real estate in certain sections was bringing what appeared to the old landowners fabulous prices, and property along the water line was held for speculation. Between the avenues, beautiful woodlands offered attractions to those who enjoyed strolling in shady places, and short paths wound through them, enabling the ramblers to go from one avenue to another without extending their walk to the main street.

One forenoon, on his way home to dinner, Barclay struck into one of these irregular paths. The shade and the coolness were grateful after the glare of the broad sunny avenue, and the underbrush that bordered the path

was sweet with the pungent fragrance of wild flowers.

Barclay had a childhood custom of gathering these dainty blossoms for his mother, and he proceeded leisurely, selecting fine clusters of blooms for his bouquet. The scent of sweetbrier drew him aside from the path, and, hidden by a clump of oaks, he discovered Miss Mowbray seated on a rock, evidently in deep meditation.

She wore a blue serge walking dress and carried a small covered basket and a parasol. A large white veil, caught over a sailor hat, somewhat concealed her features.

Barclay was about to retreat, but she started, looked up, and their eyes met. She rose, colored, hesitated just long enough for Barclay to notice her embarrassment, and then offered him her hand, speaking impulsively:

"Do not go away. I feel rested now and will have to start."

"But are you rested?"

Her pallor had impressed Barclay as he recognized her, but he at first thought that the veil caused the effect. He now felt sure that she was suffering, but he was too considerate to remark unfavorably on her appearance.

"Oh, yes. The heat is overpowering if you walk in the sun." Her voice was music in Barclay's ears.

"Why do you do it? You are not obliged to walk. I have seen you on horseback several times since——"

"Oh, have you? Why, I didn't see you."

"I know it. I was always at a distance, and you were with a party. I felt sure that you did not feel any ill effects from that long pull."

"I didn't; at least, so the doctors say. I suppose they know."

Barclay pointed to the rock.

"You were not thinking of going when I came here. You were absorbed in a painful reverie."

"Do you think Mrs. Roland will recover? I was shocked a while ago at her appearance," she said, evasively.

"Do you mean that you were permitted to see her?"

"Why not? You are there twice a day."

"Yes, but I take proper precautions. You run a great risk of contracting the fever, Miss Mowbray, going in there fatigued and heated. You must promise me to cease your visits until I give you permission to renew them."

"Oh, but Mrs. Roland is my old nurse, and we love each other, and she watches for me and brightens at the sight of me."

The girl's eyes glistened with enthusiasm.

"But if she knew that you were in danger while in her room she would shut the door against you."

"Could I carry the disease?"

"No; but you can take it and give it to others."

Miss Mowbray grew meditative. Barclay sat down a few feet from her and spoke gently.

"You can call every day and inquire at the door for her and take her little dainties, as usual. I will explain to her why you do not enter the house."

Miss Mowbray looked at Barclay; the tears started and she raised her veil to press her handkerchief to her eyes. She murmured, brokenly:

"She may die and I will not see her again."

"I don't think she is going to die. She is as well cared for as possible, and I'll agree to let you know if she changes for the worse, and shall arrange matters so that you can see her for a few minutes without incurring danger. Now, will you promise me to do as I say?"

"If I should take the fever would I die of it?"

"Not necessarily; but it is a disease that undermines the entire system."

"You are very anxious to preserve my health," Miss Mowbray said, with a curious, jarring laugh.

"That desire is the primal principle of my profession, Miss Mowbray."

She gave him a quick, startled glance.

"Do you mean that a doctor is bound to save life under all circumstances?"

"Under all ordinary circumstances; yes."

"You were not under any obligation to risk your life for mine."

"I didn't risk my life. There was only one probable danger: you might, in your mad fright, grasp me so as to render me helpless and pull me under." Barclay looked steadily at Miss Mowbray. "You are quite aware that you did precisely the reverse." Her eyes sank, she flushed slowly and remained silent. "It would not occur to me to allude to this subject to another, but do you know, Miss Mowbray, that I lie awake at night, haunted by this knowledge, and wondering why a girl like you should have attempted what you did? You have everything that this world can give—everything. Yet you tried to leave all—"

"Are you quite sure of what you are saying?"

"Yes; quite."

"But how can you be so convinced of such an idea?"

"By several circumstances that it would be almost impossible to describe. You did not speak, but I caught a look in your eyes while I was struggling to grasp your hands. What I dread is that you are still contemplating this terrible deed, and I am divided as to my duty. Sometimes I am impelled to confide in your parents, but a stronger influence, that cannot be explained, tells me that I should withhold this awful knowledge from them and appeal to you. A girl with the courage that you have displayed must be amenable to reason. No trouble that human beings have to endure will justify suicide. Every evil can be alleviated, every sorrow shared, every pain assuaged."

Emotion had kept Miss Mowbray silent. With a great effort she controlled her voice and raised her eyes to Barclay's, speaking slowly: "There are wrongs that can never be righted!"

He gazed at her fixedly.

"You are the victim of a great wrong?"

Her face was very white. She covered it with her hands.

Barclay rose quickly, walked away some distance, and after a few moments returned to her.

"Is there no one whom you can trust?"

She shook her head without raising it. Barclay sat down, speaking gently:

"Perhaps I can do something to aid you. Physicians are holders of strange secrets. They necessarily see and hear things that should not be made known, and they are in honor bound to silence."

Miss Mowbray turned to Barclay, met his glance of sympathy, and spoke with a coolness and decision that surprised him.

"You can do the one thing that will help me, if you will. Give me a poison that will leave no trace. I can take it at night and be found at rest. I know there are vegetable poisons that cannot be detected, especially where there is no suspicion of their presence. My heart is supposed to be weak after the recent excitement. I tell you it will be a mercy to me and mine if you will do this thing for me. My brain is weary with thinking how to accomplish my own destruction, so that my parents will grieve only for my death."

Barclay watched her intently, at first suspecting that she was the victim of mental disease. But her clear gaze and steady tones contradicted this theory, and her physical health told in her strong form and ordinary beauty of coloring.

"I have thought over everything, and nothing seems possible. If I disappear I can be hunted down by detectives. If I shoot myself there will be the disgrace to fall upon my people. You see, I must avoid anything that proves suicide. The other day, when you found me, death was so near that I was happy."

"But afterward, Miss Mowbray?"

"I think God will have mercy, knowing the cause and my motives."

"His mercy is limitless. I wish you would be more explicit."

"Why? I tell you there is nothing for me to do but go quietly out of life. I am of little consequence personally, but my people are devoted to me, and I cannot live to risk the discovery and disgrace that may come at any time. It nearly killed me the other day when I saw them bending over me and rejoicing in my safety. How they love me!"

She burst into a storm of sobs.

A sudden light broke upon Barclay.

III

"MISS MOWBRAY—forgive me—you have been deserted by a—a lover?"

"Yes," she answered, promptly but tremulously.

"Could not your father act for you? This man can be forced to marry you——"

"He was married to another last week."

"And he had promised to marry you?"

"Yes, we were engaged; but he told me that he was not in a position to marry me now. I met him last Winter. I spent the season in the city at my aunt's house. My own people were abroad and never saw him, and he asked me not to mention our engagement."

"What a precious villain!"

"Yes, but people would put all the blame on me. He has married a woman with a large fortune in her own right. You see, my only hope is to die. I owe it to myself, to my family. I became infatuated with this man—I trusted him. If I can die, my secret dies with me. My life is of no value. I must think of my younger sisters, of my brothers—they will regret me for a while—they are so bright, so buoyant. Grief will pass, but disgrace is never forgotten. I tell you they shall not suffer such misery through me. To-day, to-morrow—at the first opportunity—I intend to try

again for the rest and peace that will come only in death. You will not betray me? If only you would give me some opiate! . . . Ah! if you knew how I suffer! This hourly acting a part—this keeping a brave front to the world and always pondering how to leave it, while apparently most happy."

"It is enough to drive you insane."

"Yes; but I must not lose my reason, not for a moment. I must seem the light-hearted girl that I was—"

"Miss Mowbray, from my soul I pity you!"

"I think you do. I will not have another dread to face—you will not betray my confidence?"

"On the contrary, I am most anxious and willing to assist you in any way that is honorable."

"There is only one thing in your power—what I have told you."

"It would not be honorable for me to become your murderer."

"You would view it in that way?"

"Can you put it in any other light?"

Miss Mowbray adjusted her veil and rose.

"I suppose you are right."

She spoke quietly, coldly. Barclay walked with her, as their ways lay in the same direction. There was a long silence. They had reached the avenue on which she lived, when he spoke to her with gravity in voice and look.

"I want you to give me time to think over this situation. Promise me to do nothing rash until we can have another conversation. The day after to-morrow meet me where we talked just now. It is a safe place. I may see some way for you out of this labyrinth of despair."

She shook her head.

"You won't even promise me this? Why?"

"I may lose another opportunity. We go yachting nearly every afternoon."

"Miss Mowbray, you tell me that you owe me nothing but reproaches; still, I am thankful that I did save you once from death. Give me time

—two days. You are young, and life is so fair and pleasant—"

"Not to me. I have drunk its bitterness. There is nothing in it now for me. Men are perjured villains, who return ruin and despair for love and faith. God protect me from having any more to do with their professions of devotion!"

"Suppose the opportunity you expect does not present itself, will you meet me the morning after to-morrow?"

"But why? You have declined to help me."

"In one way, yes. There may be another."

"You seem so hurt at my indifference. Dr. Barclay, I will come, if, as you say, a chance does not tempt me to a sudden effort."

"I pray it may elude you for the present."

"An unkind prayer," she said, as he lifted his hat and left her.

A tall, slight man, who was standing at the stone gateway of her own house, spoke to her as she approached.

"What has detained you, dear? We have all been wondering where you could have stopped."

This was her bachelor uncle, Bache Mowbray, a wealthy middle-aged man, the most devoted slave she owned.

"I met Dr. Barclay," she said, gaily. "I had to speak to him."

"Certainly. Why didn't you bring him to lunch?"

"Oh, it wouldn't do. He would be made to feel out of his element by the people here."

"Bosh!"

"So you think, Uncle Bache; you can patronize people without letting them suspect it, but few share the gift with you."

"I don't quite understand. Professional men go everywhere. What is wrong with this young fellow?"

"Nothing. We are democratic Americans, you know, Uncle Bache. He isn't in our set—that is the best explanation I can give you."

"Caste distinction even in this country town, eh?"

"I think the lines are drawn more decidedly here than anywhere else that I know of. However, uncle, I am very sure that the Barclays consider themselves quite as good as we are."

"Of course. Why not?"

"I cannot imagine my grandfather in overalls raking hay, but perhaps if he did indulge in open air exercise he would not support a physician, as he does now, shut up all day in his office. He certainly could retire if he cared to give up business."

"Ah, but how could he put in his time? You can't sit in a club window all day long, and driving grows monotonous."

"He might buy a farm and rake hay."

"You'd better propose it to him, Mel. He'll listen to you."

"Do you think so? Now I must run and change my dress. I see lunch is just ready."

No one thought of leaving the wide hall where the household assembled before meal hours until Miss Mowbray had joined the group. She came lightly down the broad staircase, her slight figure seen to advantage in the graceful lines of a white house-dress.

"Here you are at last!" "We thought you had met with another adventure." "You shouldn't take such long walks in such weather," were some of the greetings from the party.

"You must use the buggy after this," said her mother. "You look very pale."

Miss Mowbray met this chorus with a smile and silence, took her uncle's arm and joined the line going into the dining-room.

"Shall I tell on you?" he whispered, with an arch glance.

"If you like." She shrugged her shoulders.

"I can't make you blush," he said, jokingly.

"Hardly in that direction, uncle."

"Ah, well, when I was young there was more romance abroad than I find at present."

This remark was for the benefit of

the whole party, and was taken up as a good subject for airing opinions during lunch.

The square dining-room was a continuation of the main hall, and the large table was filled by the merry company. There were three younger daughters of the house, fair and pretty growing girls, not one of them possessing the statuesque beauty of the eldest sister. There were four lads, all home for their Summer vacation and all absorbed in their own individual recreations. The guests included an old lady on a visit from the West, a Mrs. Sandford, who rejoiced in great affluence, and a pretty girl of eighteen, a former schoolmate of Miss Mowbray, who was debating how to earn her own living.

The fourteenth at the table was a slight brunette of uncertain age, a Miss Langford. She was a neighbor, and knew the social status of everybody in Bayham. She regarded Mr. Bache Mowbray with favorable eyes, listened earnestly to his remarks, and agreed with him perfectly. Presently the Barclays came under discussion. Miss Langford was fluent and dispassionate.

"Things would have been very different for young Barclay had his father lived. Philip Barclay was really a progressive man, and he had great influence with his father. He was a business man, and interested in modern improvements. He had schemes for laying out the property in building lots and having new streets opened in the tracts they own."

"What became of him?" asked Bache Mowbray.

"He was killed in a railroad accident when Richard was about ten years old. Of course, his widow and children became entirely dependent on his father, and he was too old to carry out his son's plans. Everything remained stationary. The land is farmed just as it was fifty years ago, and the old house is going to decay."

"How did the young fellow become a physician?" someone inquired.

"Why, that profession is a sort of

heritage. His mother's father was a New York doctor named Spencer. Mrs. Barclay came into possession of her father's medical library, and Richard used to pore over the books, and finally begged of his grandfather to let him study medicine. The old man is devoted to his grandson, and consented. So Richard graduated at the Long Island College, and is really very skilful. He is perfectly idolized by the poorer class here. The only trouble is the lack of money among his patients."

"I cannot understand how a man can voluntarily adopt a profession nowadays," remarked Mr. Mowbray, who faced his wife in the centre of the long table. Miss Mowbray graced one end of it and her brother Rupert the other. "Even if he is blessed with influential friends, the ranks are so overcrowded that his chances of earning a living income are very slight, and for years starvation stares him in the face. I tell you, my boys are going to have the most practical of educations, and are going into business circles, where industry and ability tell from the beginning."

"You see, professions are so attractive in themselves that aspirants for their honors will always be numerous," replied his brother. "The rewards are not pecuniary alone. A young man should follow his bent."

Rupert turned to his uncle.

"Father is quite troubled because I want to get into a magazine office as a sub-editor. He thinks literature the most hopeless of all the professions, so far as earning a living is concerned."

"I guess your father is about correct. I am acquainted with several very good writers, but they scribble for the pleasure of writing and seeing their opinions in print. They work after business hours."

"Those are the people who make it so hard for professional writers to earn an honest living with the pen," said Mrs. Sandford. "They will give away their articles rather than not have them accepted, and thus ruin

the market for those who cannot afford to write for nothing."

"You see, Uncle Bache, if I had a small salary, I could work away at my own manuscripts, and not feel worried if they didn't sell."

"What put such an ambition into your wise head?" asked Miss Mowbray, with her bright, sympathetic smile. "It would be jolly to have a literary man in the family."

Mrs. Mowbray laughed merrily.

"Why, dear, your grandfather has always entertained himself writing scraps of articles; but he keeps them for his own delectation. His diary is really valuable."

Miss Mowbray looked at her uncle. "After all, grandpa doesn't need 'the meadow sweet with hay,' Uncle Bache."

"Nor the club window," he replied, laughingly.

"If Rupert's taste is inherited, why not let him follow it?" said Mrs. Sandford, with a glance from the young man to his father. "The literary talent is a lovely gift, so refined, so vast in its influence when well directed. How did you discover that you possessed it, Rupert?"

The youth colored and spoke with some embarrassment:

"I took prizes in literary contests at college, and I have been helping to edit our college paper for some time."

"Oh, how delightful!" cried Miss Dolores Requa, the girl who was debating how to support herself. She had been listening attentively, drinking in all that was said about professions and their possibilities. She spoke with enthusiasm, looking at Rupert.

"Some people must earn money in literature, or there would not be so many new books written, and you might become famous with your very first book, for all anyone knows. It is a beautiful problem for you to solve. Oh, I hope you will persevere in your chosen profession."

"I think that where a gift is inborn, it will find means to develop," said Mrs. Sandford. "The creative faculty cannot be ignored. Besides, it

is so rare a blossom that we are all interested in seeing its growth. I'll help you, Rupert. Whenever you feel that you must write, come out to me. I'll put a room at your disposal and see that all your wants are attended to properly."

Everybody laughed.

"Now there's a generous proposition!" said Bache Mowbray. "If I were a young man, I am sure I should become the slave of genius immediately."

"Do you really believe that one becomes possessed, as it were, with the desire to write, Mrs. Sandford?" asked Miss Mowbray.

"So I am told by those who profess to know."

Rupert remained silent, but after the party had scattered for the afternoon diversions Miss Mowbray found him alone in the corner of the porch, evidently contemplating his new prospects. He was taller than his sister and two years older, resembling her in coloring.

"I thought you went boating, Mel."

"I preferred to stay home this afternoon. I want to talk with you."

"I'm afraid father considers the whole scheme a mere illusion."

"But you have another year at college, Ru. Try to distinguish yourself with your essays."

"I may win some money this year."

"You are really determined, Ru, I see; and fixity of purpose is the first requisite. I want you to promise me that you will follow your bent and succeed in literature. Uncle Bache admires your ambition, and he and Mrs. Sandford are really powerful allies. Then, Dolores is all enthusiasm, and it is nice to have appreciative friends to sing your praises."

He put his arm over her shoulder.

"How about yourself, sister? You look so serious, and you speak as if you were not to be here to encourage me; you must feel troubled or ill."

"Nervous, I fancy. Rupert, if anything should happen to me—"

"Oh, come, Mel. You mustn't entertain such a thought. See here, I'll

order the buggy and we'll take a long drive toward the north. We can talk out the matter in the open. Father will ve to admit that, after a college training as thorough as mine has been, a man should know something of his tastes and capabilities. Besides, I am willing to give up expensive habits for the privilege of pursuing literature."

"You get the buggy and I'll find a hat. Dolores went off to sail with Arthur."

"I'm glad you didn't go; that boat of Arthur's shouldn't have three people in it. I wish you would warn him about it. He doesn't listen to me. We don't want any more frights—this season, at least."

IV

At the hour he had named, Dr. Barclay reached the spot where he had met Miss Mowbray two days before, and found her there, walking about and looking very white and nervous. She wore her navy blue dress, and the basket was on the ground. She met his glance and acknowledged his bow, but did not offer her hand or show any satisfaction at seeing him.

"I am here," she said, calmly, "because, since I saw you, my brother Rupert has been with me so constantly that I lacked opportunity; besides, I wanted to hear his plans and enjoy his confidence. We have always been good friends, and he is so fond and so proud of me that my determination to save him and the others any feeling of disgrace is stronger than ever. Is there any hope of help from you?"

"I have so much to say to you," said Barclay, "that it is difficult to decide how to commence so as to make the most impression upon you. Sit down and listen attentively. Weigh every word of my proposition to you before you make up your mind to accept or decline it. I have thought it over, and it seems to me a safe and direct way out of this strange difficulty."

"A safe way?" Miss Mowbray gazed with utter amazement at Dr. Barclay, whose strong features were so fully under control that he appeared to speak without emotion. His coolness affected his companion; she composed herself to hear him, and he sat so close to her that his voice could not be overheard by casual passers-by.

"I want to assure you, in the first place, that ever since you were a little child you have been an object of interest and admiration to me. Do you recall, years ago, when you were six or eight years old, running between your great St. Bernard and a bare-legged boy who was going toward the side gate from the kitchen?"

"Yes." Miss Mowbray flushed and looked intently at Barclay. "You do not mean that you—?"

"Yes; I had volunteered to carry home some groceries that had been overlooked when the wagon went out. The grocer gave me a dime, but only for you I should have been laid up, perhaps lamed for life. I can always see you coming—your slender arms outstretched and your white skirts and your pretty hair flying. You wore red stockings. I can also remember my sensations when I heard the dog growl, and knew that if I hurried he would seize me. I was badly frightened, and you put your arms around the dog's white collar and reassured me while you held him."

"Poor Leo! He was shot finally for biting a child that came in to steal flowers. Fortunately, the poor little fellow recovered."

"It was too bad such a fine animal had to be killed. You were so fond of him."

"Yes; he was mine."

"You will understand that during all these years, while you have been unconscious of my existence, I have never forgotten that incident. I have enjoyed watching your growth into girlhood and womanhood, and your welfare and happiness are among the many things that have made my home a pleasant one to me. Environment and associations have more to do with our enjoyment of life than we are

willing to admit, even to ourselves. Now, for some time I have been contemplating a radical change in my life. I have kept my own counsel. You are a woman and you are independent of the world. Perhaps I can make you understand my position. I have my own way to make. Now, if I should explain my ambition and plans to my own people, they would oppose me and talk the matter threadbare, making the drawbacks prominent and destroying any illusions that I may indulge. So I am telling you my scheme. Yesterday I went to New York to meet a doctor, my old chum, who graduated with me. He has a paying practice in a Western city, and he wants to sell it out to me and go abroad. His health is not what it should be, and if he stops work now he will undoubtedly recover. It is very strange that he should come here at this crisis in my career and offer me the very opening that I had been making up my mind to seek and obtain."

"And you have accepted his offer?"

"I have taken it into consideration. I knew nothing of it until yesterday. He merely telegraphed me to meet him. Miss Mowbray, the night before last I spent on the shore, thinking of you. My mind was so absorbed with your problem that sleep was impossible to me. Last night I slept profoundly. I may have been exhausted, but it also seems to me that I caught an inspiration, and the effect of it was perfect rest to mind and body. If I can influence you to see with my eyes, our problems may be solved very simply and without any delay."

"You want to leave Bayham?"

"Yes; and take you with me as my wife."

Miss Mowbray started, grew very white and then flushed painfully. She kept her eyes on Barclay's as if held by some magnetic force in his, tried to speak, and only choked and gasped for breath. Barclay went on, speaking without any sign of excitement.

"I don't want you to answer me

now or to-day. Sleep to-night on the matter, and to-morrow morning go carefully over all the points that I am about to make clear to you, precisely as they appear to me. The fact that I was instrumental in saving your life will explain to the people about here what might otherwise appear incomprehensible. Everyone has a touch of romance somewhere in his or her make-up. Our sudden determination to get married will cause wonder and excite sympathy. The reason for haste in the matter will be explained by my new business arrangements. I am going West and prefer to take you with me. You are so sensible and so capable of self-control that, if my project appeals to you, I feel sure you will be able to carry out your share of the contract. Within the month we shall be safely away from here. Our destination is a long distance from here; for months to come you will be safe from the visits of friends, and we shall be among utter strangers."

"But you—you—"

"I am thinking entirely of you. I will be your protector. I will take the utmost care of you. If you will trust yourself to me you will never regret the gift. We shall be nominally man and wife. I only ask your trust and confidence in my honor and faith. If you will agree to this compact your own people will remain happy and proud of you. I should make only one proviso with you, and that is this: the cause of our marriage must remain forever a secret. I admire in you the qualities that I alone have discovered you to possess. Perhaps my devotion will in time win your respect."

"But I cannot understand such generosity, such kindness—"

"You can reward them by coming here to-morrow morning and telling me that you consent to accept my name and protection. I shall then start for New York and complete my business arrangements with Dalton. You have brothers who love and revere you, I have a mother whom I worship and a sister whom I cherish.

The marriage must be free from all suspicion. I will treat you as a lovely, delicate treasure, and do all in my power to make you happy."

"It is a great temptation."

"What, to ask you to contemplate life and an uncertain future with me?"

"Yes, life is very sweet even in itself, and then, to be able to see my people again—to be able to face them—"

"I know. Do not dwell on that side of it. I think we shall become pleasant friends, true companions—we shall have to depend so entirely upon each other for comfort and sympathy. We shall meet with bitter opposition from our people here. I am warning you, because I want you to be prepared on all sides to defend yourself and carry out this plan."

"You are good to give me time to consider it, for, indeed, all I realize at this moment is the one idea that I may continue to live without fear of disgrace—if you marry me—"

"You comprehend the matter perfectly. Whether or not you will marry me is now the only question for you to decide. The details can be easily arranged. What we want is to leave here without a moment's unnecessary delay. I don't care to drag out the pain of separating from my people, and yet I have determined to make the break now. This life here is becoming intolerable to me. There is just one way to end it, and I have reached a decision."

"In any case, you will leave Bayham?"

"Yes; but under ordinary circumstances it is for me a simple matter. For your sake I will go a distance that insures isolation for the present from all who are connected with us."

"You are sacrificing yourself—"

"I am not taking that view of the matter. I consider you a magnificent woman, beautiful in person, of strong mentality. If I voluntarily elect to save you from the temptation to imperil your soul, I have no right to claim that my action is one of self-sacrifice. It may be my salvation."

"To marry a sinful woman?"

"I object to that expression. Thus far you have not committed sin."

"The world would not agree with you."

"Yes, the thinking element would. There is a wide difference between folly and sin. One leads to the other naturally."

"You would find excuses for me?"

"I decline utterly to judge you."

"You are indeed liberal."

"I am morally certain that you have a lovely soul. I saw it in your eyes the day I rescued you. I have not seen it since. Suppose that I care to save and revive it, to restore its faith in humanity; you can give me the opportunity by sharing my home and my fortunes. Life will be very practical for us. You must not forget to take the change in your circumstances into consideration. We shall have to commence housekeeping on very limited means. We must live on what I can earn. The past will have to be put away and forgotten, because cheerfulness is a necessary factor to success in business and domestic happiness."

"You believe that I can regain a light heart?"

"Yes; if you devote yourself honestly to doing right for right's sake, the heart takes care of itself. You will discover so much to interest and absorb you in the struggles of a professional man's career and your duty to his interests that you will never find time for morbid reveries."

"I don't suppose that by merely thinking about it I could realize such a change in my surroundings."

"Why not? Consider the lives of those not blessed with independent fortunes. Look about on the people here who work each day for the needed income."

"They all appear to enjoy themselves."

"Miss Mowbray, you will consider my offer carefully and seriously?"

"I will certainly come here tomorrow and see you."

"Thank you. I shall pray that reflection will convince you that this is

a wise solution of the problem that you are facing so bravely. I regard you with tender sympathy and utter amazement. You were very good to cease your visits to Mrs. Roland. As I told you, she is not losing ground, and I think she will come through all right. She told me that she felt worried at seeing you, although your visits were those of an angel. This is a very safe council chamber, so quiet and fragrant. I think people deliberate best under the sky."

"It always has been a pet resort of mine. I used to come here to read. When I had to think seriously, I came here from habit, not expecting to meet anyone."

"That sweetbrier just at your shoulder allured me. If you conclude to marry me, we shall regard it as a potent influence in our lives."

Miss Mowbray's eyes filled. She spoke gently: "You carry a light heart, a clear conscience."

"Let me walk with you. We will talk of commonplace matters."

"Oh, no. If you care for me, go away now and leave me to my own thoughts. As you say, time presses. We must use despatch, in any case."

"But, about to-morrow—" Barclay sought her troubled glance. His was steady, searching, bright with purpose.

"I said I would come."

"Remember, I rely upon your self-control, your strong reasoning faculties, your desire to avoid giving pain to others."

"I shall not disappoint you."

Barclay would have taken her hand, but she clasped her slender fingers and turned away, going rapidly in the opposite direction. He walked homeward very slowly.

V

MISS MOWBRAY saw signs of an arrival as she reached her own gate. Several huge trunks rested on the side porch, and she could hear voices raised in bright conversation on the front piazza. She gained her own room

and dressed for lunch, taking many glances at herself before she was satisfied with her appearance.

In a large apartment opening on the upper gallery she perceived her aunt, in traveling array, superintending the placing of her trunks. This was Mrs. Gaston, Mr. Mowbray's sister, at whose house Miss Mowbray had spent the preceding Winter. Mrs. Gaston was tall, stout, handsome, effusive, and much too absorbed in herself to take keen notice of her niece.

They embraced warmly.

"So glad to get here, Mel. Well, child, so you've been indulging in the romantic! Are you quite recovered? I hope your knight is young and handsome. How sweet you look! so cool in that light lawn! Oh, dear! I am nearly exhausted with the heat! I'll have to sit down and let Jane struggle with the unpacking. Jane, find me something light and thin. Mel, come to your room; I have so much to tell you!"

Once in her niece's beautiful room, Mrs. Gaston closed the door and lowered her voice, gazing straight at the girl, whose features had hardened into strong lines of self-control.

"What did you think of his marriage? I was completely thunderstruck. Why, of course you never intimated the least thing, but I felt sure that you and he had come to an understanding. I knew that his affairs were somewhat involved, and supposed that he and you did not care to have an engagement announced too soon. Dear! I never was so stunned as when I opened his wedding cards!"

"I received them too, Aunt Kate."

Miss Mowbray's white face appealed to her aunt. Mrs. Gaston put her arms around her and kissed her.

"He has married for money. You mustn't let yourself think of him, child. These mistakes will occur." Mrs. Gaston threw herself on a lounge. Miss Mowbray walked to the window and gazed out, seeing nothing. Her aunt's voice was like a hammer, striking every nerve in her body and thrilling her from head to foot. "I

suppose people would blame me. Mel, have you discussed the matter here?"

"No, not at all."

"Oh, how fortunate for yourself—and for me! Ned would take me to task for encouraging his visits and letting you accept his attentions, Mel. I certainly thought he was sincere in his liking for you. I thought him perfectly eligible. If only you can assure me that he has not won your love—"

"Aunt Kate, if you will simply never allude to him again you will be doing me the greatest possible kindness. Let me forget that I ever saw him."

"Oh, Mel! If you can—I shall be happy. A whole season thrown away for him is really a great piece of injustice to you. Still, if your dear heart is whole we won't worry, child! You look so pretty."

"I am glad I look like myself."

"Like one of these great emotional actresses at a crisis, I think. I have been so worried about you, not knowing how you would take the news!"

"There was only one way to take it: quietly—and silently."

"I always thought that you had a good share of common sense."

"I have some natural pride."

"I have heard several people remark that you are the proudest looking girl they ever saw."

"Then I don't look as if my heart had been broken?"

"No, indeed!"

"Perhaps I look as if I had no heart to break."

"You certainly are very beautiful, Mel."

"Ah, well, Aunt Kate, I put the wedding cards in the waste-paper basket. What I thought and felt and hoped can make no difference now. He is as dead to me as if he were in his grave."

"I am so relieved to hear you say this! I never was so deceived in a man; never. It gives one a terrible shock to learn so much evil of human nature."

"Poor human nature! It has so

much to answer for, Aunt Kate. I always supposed that it was as natural to do right as to do wrong."

"With you, Mel, yes; more so. I don't believe you could do wrong."

Miss Mowbray became very pale and sat down. Her aunt regarded her with much sympathy, and going to her, bent to caress her.

"Dear, we'll never mention this affair again. You have taken the best course—to ignore him and his forever. Now, I suppose Jane is waiting patiently with that thin dress. I had forgotten all about it."

"I'll come for you, aunt, in a few minutes."

"I hear Bache laughing. What a pretty girl your schoolmate is!"

"Yes, and a very lovely character."

"I wish she would captivate Bache. He ought to marry. A man can't afford to be a very old bachelor, and if Bache waits until his hair gets much grayer, no girl will accept him. He'll have to put up with a widow or a maiden of uncertain age. Advise him to propose to your merry little friend."

"Perhaps I may."

"I trust your match-making will turn out better than my attempt."

"I know more about my principals."

"Yes. Bache is a man of honor."

"I think he is."

"Now, I'm really off."

Miss Mowbray found her salts, and soon after, with a heroic effort, presented herself to the assembled family in the hall.

They adjourned to the dining-room, all earnestly arranging a long drive for the afternoon. That matter disposed of, some remarks made by Mrs. Sandford suggested the French system of marriage, and everybody became interested, excited and voluble.

"It is simply outrageous in theory and practice!" cried Rupert. "It is a disgrace to the French nation!"

"Well, now, my dear young friend," said Mrs. Sandford, gently, "there are two sides to the question, and you would be surprised to hear sensible French people enlarging upon

the beneficial results of the system. Remember, I am neither advocating it nor defending it; but we reach an age when we are quite willing to look into the methods practiced by others and study their reasons."

"The whole matter is based upon calculation," said Bache Mowbray. "What we consider the one essential, they ignore altogether."

"Do you mean love?" asked Dolores Requa.

"Yes." Bache Mowbray met her bright eyes as he replied: "That is what I mean."

"But how could people get along without love?" she said, naively.

"Magnificently! Far better than with it. They have no emotions to interfere with their ordinary occupations," replied the bachelor, sagely, while the listeners laughed heartily. "They simply join forces, as it were."

"Sometimes they fall in love with each other after their marriage," remarked Mrs. Sandford.

"More times they fall in love with somebody else," said Mrs. Gaston.

"Come, come!" cried Mr. Mowbray. "As a rule, they do manage to work together for their own interests, and become very firm friends and pleasant companions. I am told that they often become devoted to each other."

"Good heavens, Ned! You don't believe such stuff as that, I hope?" cried Mrs. Gaston. "Why, it is a business copartnership, nothing else."

"How strange it must seem to be the wife of a perfect stranger!" said Dolores. "I wouldn't know what to say or what to do with him."

"It is well for you that you were not born in France," said Bache Mowbray. "By this time you would have been married by your relatives to someone with a bank account and whatever personal qualifications were deemed necessary by your parents."

"Really!" Dolores opened her eyes with amazement.

"Oh, yes, indeed!" said Mrs. Sandford. "I have a friend who was married the day after she left school to a man that she had never even heard

of until he was introduced as her husband-elect."

"And do you know him?"

"Certainly. He is a very pleasant person."

"Gracious!" gasped Dolores. "It must have been very awkward and embarrassing at first."

"They are a very charming and loving couple now, I can assure you," said Mrs. Sandford. "My friend explains 'the marriage of reason' very frankly. The young people are provided with a moderate income, and the principal is so invested that they cannot spend it. They have no financial care to trouble them, so they can, if sensible, study each other's tastes and adapt themselves to a thorough enjoyment of what they really possess in themselves and in each other. As a rule, there is a common desire to adjust important matters harmoniously and agree to disagree if necessary in trifling questions."

"You see, Miss Dolores, how you would be handed over to some individual who might not have one of the imposing qualities that your hero possesses," said Bache Mowbray.

"How do you know anything about my hero, Mr. Mowbray?"

"Oh, every girl has an ideal hero whom she secretly worships."

"French girls have no such illusions," said Mrs. Sandford. "They are treated after the Oriental custom. The parents take care of the girl by placing her in a boarding-school until she is marriageable. Then she is given into her husband's charge. A woman is not supposed to nurse illusions; she knows nothing of men, either by reading of them or through acquaintance with them. After she is married she meets them in society."

"That's what plays the mischief," said Bache Mowbray.

"Well, now, the theory that a girl should be guarded throughout is not such a very foolish one, in my opinion," said Mrs. Sandford. "The majority of women would prefer to be given a good home and protected in it. It is only the exceptional woman whose passions prove stronger than

her reasoning faculties and carry her beyond the bounds of propriety."

"Yes, and that danger prevails here, where the young people arrange their own affairs," said Mr. Mowbray. "However, I have no patience with the French system."

"Can't a girl have a little flirtation before she really makes up her mind to marry and settle down to house-keeping?" asked Dolores.

Bache Mowbray shook his head at her. "Impossible! That would be a shocking breach of manners."

"Well, I never wanted to be a French girl," said Dolores. "Isn't Mel amusing? She listens and eats, and doesn't commit herself by a word."

"I think the subject is intensely interesting. I hope you will all continue to discuss it," said Miss Mowbray, with a lovely smile and a charming flush. "I should think that if two people with congenial tastes agreed to a marriage of reason they might make life very pleasant for each other."

"Hear! Hear!" cried Rupert. "The oracle has spoken."

"Provided human nature were passionless," said Mrs. Mowbray. "Mel is, fortunately, too young to realize the meaning of the discussion."

"Let us be thankful for youth, with its ideals and fancies," said Mrs. Sandford.

VI

"AND let us settle about our drive," said Rupert. "Mel, can you take Aunt Kate in the buggy, going? You see, we had all the seats in the carriage and wagons arranged before she arrived. Coming home, we can change about."

"That will please Mel and me," said Mrs. Gaston.

The party lost no time in starting, and as their destination was many miles away, a supper was to be sent to them, and they intended to return by moonlight.

The buggy was low and easy, the horse gentle and accustomed to Miss

Mowbray's light touch. The road was cut for miles through woodlands, and the arching trees shut out the sun, while the fragrant damp underbrush cooled the atmosphere.

Miss Mowbray brought up the rear of the jolly procession, and often alighted to gather ferns and wild-flowers that pleased her fancy. Mrs. Gaston enjoyed the motion and the dreamy, drowsy warmth and stillness. Conversation lagged or was confined to the interest of the moment.

A tall, masculine figure that they were gradually nearing attracted Mrs. Gaston. He was walking rapidly, considering the heat. Miss Mowbray passed him, drew up and turned to bow to him. He raised his hat and stopped, his keen gaze fixed upon her.

"Dr. Barclay, this is Mrs. Gaston, my aunt. I want you to meet her. Aunt, Dr. Barclay is the gentleman to whom I owe my life."

"Oh, I am delighted to have this pleasure!" Mrs. Gaston cordially shook hands with Dr. Barclay. "You must know that I can't express my gratitude in words."

Her eyes filled, and the pause was impressive. No one attempted any small-talk.

"I wish there was room here for you," Miss Mowbray said. "It is such a warm day, and you must be going a long way."

"I am, but the walk is good for me."

"Surely I shall have the pleasure of seeing you at the house," said Mrs. Gaston.

"Thank you, I shall be very happy to call."

There was a long silence in the buggy after it started. Miss Mowbray seemed wholly absorbed in driving and Mrs. Gaston was thoroughly interested in her new acquaintance.

"What a handsome young fellow!" she exclaimed. "His features are so refined, so sensitive! I think he has the finest eyes I ever saw. Are they blue or black?"

"I don't know."

"You don't! I can tell you, if I

should be picked out of the water by such a man, I'd know the color of his eyes before this."

"I wasn't thinking of the matter, aunt."

"He has fair hair and skin, so I suppose they must be very dark blue."

"It is so good of you, aunt, to take some interest in his appearance——"

"You mean that you do not. You must see that he has a fine figure."

"I am sure that he is very strong."

"Yes; that, of course, you must have discovered. Well, naturally you feel indifferent."

"Entirely."

"Well, I am enthusiastic about him. I really think it doubles the romance to be rescued by a young and handsome gentleman."

"You think he is a gentleman?"

"Decidedly!"

Miss Mowbray relapsed into silence.

"I suppose the man is married?"

Mrs. Gaston remarked. "There is always something to destroy the illusion we think to enjoy." After a perceptible pause Miss Mowbray said, with an effort:

"He is not married."

"Oh! you charm me. I shall cultivate him! I wonder why such an attractive young physician should bury himself in this out-of-the-way place!"

"Perhaps to rescue me."

"Maybe. He can't have much opportunity for advancement in such a place."

"He belongs here, aunt. The Barclays are one of the old families of Bayham."

"Aristocrats?"

"I don't know what they think of themselves. Every place must have its old families, I suppose. Even the fishermen about here have many generations of ancestors in their family plots."

"It reminds me of that song your Uncle Bache sings:

"St. Patrick was a gentleman,
And came of dacent people.

"I suppose it is an amiable weakness to boast of nice progenitors.

"The longer I live the more I believe in heredity."

Miss Mowbray's reverie lasted until they reached the opening where the other members of the party were gathered. Merrymaking was in order, and the most important thing in the world was the construction of a fire, so that Mrs. Sandford could have a cup of tea. The amateurish efforts of the combined force of young people afforded fun for the elders. Miss Mowbray wandered off, ostensibly in search of dry brushwood, and found a fallen tree that made a most comfortable seat. Here she took up the theme uppermost in her mind. Her aunt's opinion of Dr. Barclay was an unexpected and powerful help. It seemed to follow and accord with the conversation at lunch to a remarkable degree, and to her amazement she felt herself combining the arguments concerning the French marriage system with Dr. Barclay's urgent pleading regarding his proposition to her. She was interrupted by her uncle calling to her and approaching. He seated himself, as if highly pleased at the meeting, sighing with relief.

"Well, you are sensible. They have a fire roaring away there that would roast an ox. Don't you want some tea?"

"Oh, no. I am glad to keep cool. It is delightful here. Where is Dolores?"

"Gone boating with Rupert on that pond they call a lake. Won't it dry up in this weather?"

"No. It is very deep and formed by natural springs. We get nice fish there. Are they fishing?"

"I guess not; flirting, more likely."

"Uncle Bache, why don't you marry Dolores?"

"What, that child! She wouldn't look at me, love."

"Why, you're very nice to look at, uncle, dear. I wish you only knew what a darling girl Dolores is! She is so kind-hearted, so generous! You know, her father failed in the Spring, and a real failure it was. There is a great family of children, like our own. Dolores is going to teach this Fall if

she can find an opening. She has a lovely disposition."

"That is easily seen."

"Are you past the falling-in-love age, uncle?"

"Ho, ho! Now, that's a poser. Mel, where are your eyes? I saw the game the very day I came here. I'm too old a soldier to fall in love with a young man's sweetheart. What could I get? Nothing worth the taking."

"But I am all amazement—"

"You're all abstraction. You are too much taken up with your own interests to see what is before you."

"But Rupert cannot marry now—"

"And I can. Is that what you are thinking?"

"I don't mean that Dolores should accept you if she cares for Rupert. I know she will marry for love."

"They are young enough. A year or two will pass quickly for them. An engagement will keep both happy and ambitious. You'll have to find me another pretty schoolmate."

"I'm sorry for you and glad for Rupert."

"You'll have a sister instead of an aunt."

"I'm going to beg for some tea, Uncle Bache. I am growing either stupid or sleepy."

"We'll go together. Ah, Mel, you still have a true love in me."

"You're so nice, Uncle Bache. Wouldn't it break your heart if I should marry?"

"Is that the thing you are mooning over? That's another conundrum. Mel, the man who can make you happy will be a wonder. You'll have to be very cautious in making a choice of a husband."

"Oh, dear!"

Miss Mowbray put her arm around her uncle's neck and her cheek against his shoulder. He could not see her face.

"Why do you say 'Oh, dear'? I know that love the passion is not supposed to go hand in hand with caution; but, suppose you felt this passion for a man, I should warn you to reason with yourself and discover

if you felt equally attracted by his mental attainments and by his moral endowment. You see, child, we are a many-sided creation. You might marry for love a man whose fascinations of manner and appearance would keep you constant and devoted to him, and his love for you might be the best that he could feel for a woman, and yet you would be a very unhappy, unsatisfied being. Of course, you could disguise your discontent. But, Mel, I want to see you the wife of a man who will win your admiration and develop your intellectual faculties. You are a woman whose growth in mind and spirit should last with life. So don't decide hastily or under the influence of passion alone. As we grow in years we crave mental companionship, sympathy, moral support. We must improve, or we deteriorate. The tastes and needs of middle age are very different from those of youth. Your little friend will be happier with Rupert, who is young, buoyant and ambitious."

Miss Mowbray's arms tightened about her uncle's neck. Then she stood up, speaking lightly:

"Let us get the tea."

In silence they returned to the party and helped themselves to the refreshment. Rupert and Dolores appeared soon after, carrying water-lilies as trophies. Rupert brought a large bunch to his sister, and spoke earnestly:

"Can we have the buggy going home? It will be too dark for you to trust the road."

"I know it. Aunt Kate and I will be much more comfortable in a wagon."

"You're awfully good, Mel, to give us the long drive all to ourselves!"

Miss Mowbray held the flowers carelessly; several dropped, and her brother stopped to restore them. Their eyes met.

"Rupert, is this only a flirtation? Dolores is so sincere——"

"Mel, we are engaged. We intended to tell you at the very first opportunity. We knew you would be delighted."

VII

RUPERT beckoned to Dolores, who joined him, flushing prettily and gazing timidly at Miss Mowbray, who drew her friend to her and kissed her in silence. Rupert was quite overcome at his sister's emotion. She struggled to say, in a half-whisper:

"Is it to be a secret?"

"Not much! We are going to announce it after supper, just as the wine is opened, so you can all toast us. Of course, Mel, we depend upon you for a speech. You always say the very nicest thing at the right moment."

"Do I? You both know how I love you."

Dolores embraced her, and the girls, arm in arm, wandered off for farther confidences. The occasion was all that the young people desired. The lunch was delicious, the improvised tables were comfortable, everybody was in good humor and the scene was picturesque. In one of the pauses Rupert rose with Dolores and found that his little speech was wholly unnecessary. Everybody understood, and congratulations were in order.

"The bride and groom-elect," said Bache Mowbray, proposing the first toast.

Miss Mowbray rose to speak:

"An American betrothal!" she said, gravely, smiling at Rupert and Dolores, whose upturned faces were aglow with delight. "There is nothing French about this engagement."

"No, thank heaven!" said Mr. Mowbray, fervently.

"The future of the young people!" said Mrs. Mowbray, glancing at them with only a mother's look. "May it be as beautiful as the present."

Mrs. Sandford wiped away some tears and drank the toast.

"Mother, can we have a great big wedding-cake?" asked Celia Mowbray, a child of ten. A burst of merriment was the response, while Mrs. Gaston assured her younger nieces and nephews that all should have large pieces of cake to eat and to dream on.

It was late when the joyous party returned; there was another scene of congratulations and kissing in the great hall, and then a happy "Good-night."

Miss Mowbray found herself alone and very wakeful in her quiet, beautiful room, and sat down by an open window to think over her own problem. The minutes slowly passed. No sense of drowsiness assailed her faculties. The dire condition in which she was placed seemed more intolerable than ever. To get away from it, to lose sight of her surroundings, to be far from the loving eyes that now sought her with affection from morning until night—this was her whole desire. She gazed at the distant ocean. Calm and sure would be the rest in its great billows, with their endless rocking. But the promise given to Dr. Barclay should not be broken. She remembered that she was to consider his proposition. It was an effort to think coolly of all his words. She wondered, if, possibly, she might become insane and betray herself in wild ravings. Finally, she lay on a lounge near the window and watched the night passing and the coming of dawn.

The rising bell warned her; she trusted to the interest that Dolores would excite to shield her from close observation.

Her surmise proved correct. To her utter relief, she found Dolores the centre of attraction and the object of general attention. The children were abroad gathering blossoms to decorate the table; Dolores stood on the lawn with Mr. Mowbray in merry converse, and Mrs. Gaston and her brother, Bache, were earnestly discussing the possibilities of a short engagement for the young people.

Miss Mowbray started on her walk alone, mechanically following her usual paths, but when she reached Mrs. Roland's little cottage she found that she had taken half an hour longer than usual to traverse the distance. Mrs. Roland was better, her nurse reported, returning Miss Mowbray's basket. Later on Miss Mowbray set

out to keep her appointment with Dr. Barclay.

The morning was sultry. She had put on a white cotton dress, and yet felt warm and unequal to the homeward walk. At the edge of the wood she saw Dr. Barclay watching for her. He spoke gently.

"You are so long behind time that I grew anxious and came to look for you."

"I left home at the usual time. This morning my feet feel like heavy weights. Perhaps that is a sign that I should not be here."

"You look very white and fatigued. It is due to the weather."

"The weather will answer very well."

"Did you sleep?"

"Not at all."

"I see. No wonder you look worn out."

Miss Mowbray voluntarily put her arm in Dr. Barclay's and leaned upon it as they walked. She looked up to meet his glance. "I have thought until I can think no more. Sometimes I have a sensation as if something within me were about to give way. If only insanity meant death, I wouldn't care. It doesn't. I am too strong, too healthy. To be mad under such circumstances would be a terrible thing. What do you suppose has happened? Rupert has just become engaged to my dearest friend. Everybody at home is so happy!" Her lips quivered.

"For your sake that is a fortunate incident."

"How do you mean?"

"It divides the interest. Our marriage will not absorb all the thought of the family."

"You still care to marry me?"

"Let us sit down here. You must get over this sense of weakness. I want you to be perfect mistress of yourself."

"I seem to have lost all power of self-control."

"It is the reaction from the high pressure of the last few weeks. You must be strong to guard your words and looks until we are safely away

from here; then you shall give way entirely. The tension will be removed, your nerves will relax."

"But I dread accepting all this from you. The day will surely come when you will regret your own generosity to a woman who gives you nothing in return for all your goodness."

"Why discount the future? What do we know about it? Let us do the best we can think of to-day and leave the future in the shadows."

"I feel already like a child that is worn out with pain and finds a gentle nurse offering to take it. I am not the strong woman I thought myself. I am willing to throw myself and my misery upon you."

"You are really hesitating."

"But in this case I should be saved. I appreciate your goodness." Miss Mowbray offered her hands to Dr. Barclay. "It is the future that worries me."

Dr. Barclay held her hands and, bending, pressed his lips to them. Then he fixed his eyes upon hers.

"You forget what a material age we live in. We are not bound to remain together if we cannot find peace under one roof. Reason will govern us throughout. I want you to tell me something about your name. It is so beautiful. I hope you will let me call you by it."

"Why not? Nobody calls me by it now. It is too long. You can have the sole right to it. I believe Melusina was a water nymph who married a human lover. She had the habit of disappearing at intervals and returning to her husband, on condition that he would not watch her or try to learn her secret. He broke his promise and lost her forever. Mother was so enchanted with Mendelssohn's music, the 'Overture to Melusina,' that she gave me the name."

"It seems very appropriate."

Miss Mowbray flushed and shivered.

"I never thought of that."

"If it troubles you, do not think of it now. Let me indulge the curious illusion. The myth is novel to me and most interesting."

"But have you considered the risk you run in marrying a woman whose mind is in a state of utter confusion? I thought I was well trained; I am naturally religious; I always knew right from wrong; now, all is chaos."

"I have been thinking about you. I had reasoned the whole matter to my own satisfaction before I made you this proposition. Listen a few moments. You were born and educated in a fine atmosphere created by love and goodness. Your people are all worthy of respect. I have been in a position all my life to hear the criticisms of the townspeople. You grew up to love and trust everybody. Your nature was generous and warm-hearted; and you went among strangers and gave them credit for being as good as those to whom you were accustomed. I think your perfect confidence in others is a proof of your own uprightness. I believe that your true nature will reassert itself."

"You are justifying my confidence in the good that is in human nature."

"I shall be content if, one of these days, I may see you looking as you did last Summer. I often passed you when you did not notice me."

"I was very happy last Summer. My love for my own people was the strongest feeling of which I was conscious."

"You were an innocent girl."

"Now I am a passionate woman, and I cannot tell which is uppermost, love or hate."

"When both are conquered, happiness will return."

"Ah, but will they ever be conquered? I am the slave."

"Perhaps, just at present."

"You speak as if you had had experience! Did you ever conquer a passion that was bringing you only hopeless misery?"

"No. My passions are very few and easily indulged. Miss Mowbray, wealth is a most desirable blessing; but I find that the necessity to labor for one's daily bread is a blessing also. Still, passions have nothing to do with purses. Passions are human; it is

only when they make us very unhappy that we should struggle to subdue them. Love is the sublimest thing we have, the only passion that makes life worth the living. A worthy object is what we all seek."

"And is it being just to yourself to burden your life with me?"

"I have strong shoulders."

"You know what I mean."

"Let me be the judge of my own strength. I am waiting patiently for you to give me the right to become your protector."

"You are a brave man, I think."

"You are the kind of woman to inspire a man with courage."

"You arouse my curiosity. I think you talk more as a clergyman might than as a doctor."

"I think it is due to being so much with my mother. She has had a great deal of trouble and many trials. She has wonderful faith in the doing of one's duty each day and leaving the morrow to take care of its own needs. She really spends her days in promoting the comfort of those about her. 'The duty nearest to me,' is her motto. Her religion is so practical and beautiful that no one who knows her can doubt the power of faith in Divine Providence."

"How can you find courage to leave her?"

"The sense of duty supplies it. I should be able to support myself, and if I did the same amount of work among strangers that I do here I could increase her comforts and put by something for a rainy day. There is no real opening here—none whatever. I don't propose to grow gray in the service of this community. I want to try specialty practice as soon as possible. It not only pays better than general work, but the chances are greater for winning enduring recognition. Several of my articles have already been printed, and I only write about one subject."

"You have a passion for your profession."

"I have. I love it. I am completely absorbed by it. Here, the limitations are endless. No one

would dream of summoning me to an important case. My elders hesitate to call me in consultation. The boy that grew up under their eyes will always be a boy to them, underrated and despised, because they fancy they can measure me by my surroundings. What a comfort it is to talk to you! You look sympathetic, and you can understand me and my ambition."

"I think you are doing me incalculable good. You are taking me away from myself. I feel interested in your ideas, anxious to assist you in realizing your desires. But, then, I couldn't."

"Oh, but you can. I must have a well-ordered home, someone to listen to me when I feel like being communicative."

"A mental companion?"

"Exactly. Our income will be so small that our minds will have to be our kingdoms for some time to come. One of these days, when I can succeed in bringing a smile to your face, I shall consider a great victory won. When I hear you laugh naturally I shall believe in the power of right to overcome wrong."

"I am completely unnerved." Miss Mowbray rose and began walking to and fro in the small clearing. Dr. Barclay glanced toward her from time to time and drew odd figures on the sandy ground. Presently she turned to him, speaking with difficulty:

"I had such lovely theories of marriage! How could I help it? My own parents are so happy! How can we go through with this—?"

"Easily enough, if you will simply put aside fears for the future."

"I dread it."

"If you understood me better you would not feel afraid to undertake what I propose. You see, I comprehend the whole situation. Suppose you agree to be guided by me from this moment. Trust to me to arrange all the important matters. You have only to consent to be my wife. No one has any right to question your motives if you express the wish to marry me. I will do all the talking.

You will have to keep perfectly cool and mount guard over your tongue."

"Yes, take refuge in silence."

"It is a strong tower."

"It is terrible to feel so utterly weak and miserable as I do now—so in need of help, so desperate—"

Miss Mowbray's voice broke. She sat down and, leaning against a tree, sobbed bitterly.

"A good cry is precisely what will relieve you most. When you feel better you will be sure to take the sensible view of our agreement."

Dr. Barclay spoke quietly, but his eyes were fixed on his companion, and as she looked up he held out his hands with a gesture of tenderness and sympathy not to be expressed in words.

Miss Mowbray stood up and put her hands in his without uttering a sound, but the look in her white face haunted him. She leaned heavily on his arm during their slow walk to her home, and he entered the broad hall with her.

It was deserted. Having made her assure him that she would take every care of herself, he left her, telling her that on the next day he would call on her father and make his formal request for her hand in marriage.

Miss Mowbray watched him crossing the lawn to the gate, and then slowly mounted to her own room.

VIII

On the following morning, when Dr. Barclay opened Mr. Mowbray's gate, the entire family party saw his arrival. A game of croquet was in progress on the spacious lawn, absorbing the youthful members; Mrs. Sandford was knitting in a sunny corner of the wide piazza; Rupert was reading to Dolores under a shade tree; Mrs. Mowbray and Mrs. Gaston were chatting and watching the game, and the brothers were talking of business matters in the library, the windows of which commanded the approaches to the front of the house.

When Dr. Barclay was ushered into

this room Bache Mowbray left it and joined his niece, who was embroidering near Mrs. Sandford.

Miss Mowbray was exquisitely dressed in white, her cheeks were flushed and her eyes brilliant. Her uncle gave her an admiring glance.

"How does it come you are not off with those supplies for the invalid?"

"I will take them later on."

"I see your friend has just called."

"Uncle Bache, I expect to marry him and go out West with him."

"My girl! have you taken leave of your senses? Aren't you joking?"

"No, thoroughly in earnest. You must be on my side if father is opposed to our marriage!"

"On your side? Of course; but you must give me time to comprehend what I feel to be a stunning blow. What does it all mean?"

"Ah, Uncle Bache, simply what I just told you."

"Does your mother know—?"

"Not yet—only you. Dr. Barclay will explain everything better than I can."

Bache Mowbray regarded his beautiful niece with an earnestness that deepened the lovely color in her cheeks. She nervously folded her work and put it aside.

"It strikes me that Cupid has taken up his abode about these premises. Rupert only yesterday—this morning you are the victim. I'm beginning to feel nervous myself."

"Oh, I wish you would marry, Uncle Bache. You are so nice! Some good woman is missing your devotion."

"Ah, you flatter me, child. Dear, dear! I am so astonished!"

"Yes—but don't congratulate me until father and mother have consented. I suppose Dr. Barclay is having a serious time in the library."

"I'm bound to admire his courage. Kate has been raving about him; his manner and fine appearance have won her."

"Yes, Aunt Kate met him yesterday, and really liked him."

"This is romance gone crazy. May I tell Kate?"

"Oh, yes!"

Dr. Barclay was indeed having a serious time. He began by telling Mr. Mowbray that he had an important matter to consult him about, and the two men sat down near the bay window in the sunshine. Mr. Mowbray was surprised by the visit, but listened courteously while the young man explained his new project, and his reasons for expecting success in the chosen field for his professional duties. It occurred to Mr. Mowbray that his visitor wanted letters of introduction and reference from him, and he mentally concluded to agree to the request.

He greatly admired the doctor's manner and appearance, and warmly agreed with him in his ambitious desire for a change of scene and opportunities. However, his surprise gave way to amazement when Dr. Barclay proceeded to say that he wished to marry and take his wife with him; that he had some money, sufficient for all present purposes, and that he had won Miss Mowbray's consent to ask for her hand.

"My daughter!"

Mr. Mowbray could scarcely enunciate the word.

"Yes. Miss Mowbray has accepted me. We hope to be married within the month."

"But I don't understand! Engaged to Melusina!" Mr. Mowbray's incredulity and the shock of the information had deprived him of his usual fluency. He stared at the doctor and tried to speak coolly. "This is a perfect surprise. I was not aware that there was any acquaintance between you. Of course, I know about the accident—but—"

His embarrassment was painful. Dr. Barclay, who was entirely self-possessed, hastened to explain:

"It led to a conversation at an accidental meeting. We have since met, and an understanding of this nature is the result. If you will send for Miss Mowbray—"

"I suppose that will be the wisest course." Miss Mowbray appeared, supported by her mother, her Aunt

Kate and her Uncle Bache. Mr. Mowbray saw by their excited looks and manner that they were quite aware of the object of the doctor's visit. He glanced at his daughter, and was amazed to see her cross the room with perfect ease and dignity and stand beside Dr. Barclay.

"Daughter, is this true?" His voice was barely audible.

"Yes."

Miss Mowbray's eyes were downcast, and her cheeks burned, but her "yes" was distinct.

"You are willing to leave us thus suddenly?"

Miss Mowbray turned to Dr. Barclay and then glanced toward her parents. "I prefer to go with him—" Her voice broke.

"Ned, she wouldn't be a Mowbray if she couldn't speak like that," said Bache Mowbray. "Come, kiss the child and congratulate the young people."

Mrs. Mowbray had already caught her daughter to her breast and was now shaking hands with the doctor, whose quiet, earnest manner was winning everyone's confidence.

Mr. Mowbray took his daughter in his arms, kissed her and then put her hand in Dr. Barclay's. Then Mrs. Gaston broke the solemn silence with an effusive speech full of warm feeling and kind wishes, and Bache Mowbray went to collect the youthful contingent.

The rest of the morning was given up to exclamations and explanations and wild speculations. The doctor remained for lunch, and rapidly advanced in the good graces of the younger Mowbrays. They all knew him by sight and reputation and were soon prepared to welcome him as one of the family.

Miss Mowbray abandoned herself to the petting and hugging and kissing that she loved, and was so gentle and silent that no one troubled her with curiosity.

The romantic side of the affair satisfied everybody. When Dr. Barclay took his leave, pleading that urgent business called him away, Miss Mow-

bray set out to see Mrs. Roland, and the elders sat down to discuss the important questions connected with the coming wedding.

Bache Mowbray saw all the advantages in Dr. Barclay's intended removal. He had traveled extensively in the West, knew the city where the doctor meant to settle, and was enthusiastic about its beauty and rapid business growth. The two drawbacks, in Mr. Mowbray's opinion, were the distance and the short time to elapse before the wedding. There were no objections that could be urged against the young doctor. He was evidently calculated to make his own way in the world, and his independence was worthy of admiration.

Mr. Mowbray had a long conversation with his daughter; but she naturally saw with Dr. Barclay's eyes, and was firm in her resolution to leave Bayham when he did.

Mrs. Gaston had a secret theory that pique had much to do with her niece's rapid consent to marry Dr. Barclay; but she kept her ideas to herself, being a very cautious woman in some ways, and she felt perfectly satisfied that Dr. Barclay would make an excellent husband.

There was so much to be done, and so little time in which to make the wedding preparations; so much excitement and novelty connected with them, and so much feeling and emotion mingled with the mere business details, that everybody lived, for the time being, in a new world. It was, on the whole, a very pleasant world, filled with strange sensations, queer happenings and unexpected delights.

The news of the engagement and the coming wedding flashed together throughout Bayham. Mr. and Mrs. Mowbray made the wedding arrangements to please their own tastes, and did everything on a most lavish scale. All the needlewomen in the town were overwhelmed with orders. The bride-elect went to New York with her mother to collect her trousseau. The church had to be overhauled and decorated for the occasion, and, mean-

while, congratulations and presents poured in on the young people.

Old Anthony Barclay reveled in his grandson's good fortune, and everywhere sustained and applauded the young man's intention of settling in a new city. He overcame Mrs. Barclay's grief and despair by portraying the future in store for a man of Richard's ability and energy.

"What more could you ask?" he said, with unconcealed exultation. "We gave him the best education we could afford. Hasn't he made as much of it as he could in this one-horse old town? Would you ask him to rot here with people not fit to be mentioned in the same breath with him? Isn't he going to marry the belle of the town? Show me her equal anywhere! Hasn't he watched her all her pretty life, growing like a beautiful flower for him to gather? You should be a proud, thankful woman, instead of sitting round moping."

"But not to be able to see him after having him all these years to myself!" pleaded Mrs. Barclay.

"You see, you're only thinking of yourself. If you are really fond of him, you'll be glad to see him go where he will be appreciated, where he will have scope. Look around you at the men that never had the spunk to get out of this place. Stupid sots! Do you want Dick to wither up like a plant that can't get air and light? That's what will happen to him if he hangs round here a few more years. Now is the time for him to start away. He's young and strong, and full of courage and hope. I'd like to go with him! We can take a trip to see him after a while. Why not? It will do us good to see for ourselves the great West that we're always reading about. It will give us enough to think about and talk over for the balance of our lives. Is Dick going to take all his grandfather's books?"

"Yes. I've been sorting and dusting them."

"And crying over them, I'll bet! That's like a woman," and the old man returned cheerfully to his rosebushes.

IX

THE wedding of Dr. Richard Barclay and Miss Melusina Mowbray was a memorable event in the history of Bayham.

The day was perfect. Tents were erected on the lawn, giving the affair the festive appearance that is only possible in the open air, where sunshine and foliage produce exquisite effects. Guests from all quarters had arrived to grace the occasion; the townspeople were abroad in their Sunday best, as the church was open to all who cared to witness the ceremony.

The wedding party was dazzling; the bride looking her loveliest in her white draperies and veil, and her four fair bridesmaids rivaling each other in girlish beauty and gaiety of spirits.

Anthony Barclay had taken his daughter-in-law to the city shortly before the date set for the marriage, and, as a result, they entered the church together so well dressed and joyous looking that people stared twice to feel sure of their identity.

Rupert was best man. Bache Mowbray and his younger nephews acted as ushers. The rector, who had baptized bride and groom, was visibly affected throughout the ceremony, but recovered his spirits and made a nice speech at the breakfast that followed. Mr. and Mrs. Mowbray went about among the groups, the observed of all observers after the bride and groom. They were so merry, so unaffectedly happy, that everybody was moved to congratulate them.

Time, as usual, took wings, and the moment came when the young couple appeared in traveling dress on the porch, and the carriage to take them to the station drew up at the gate.

The laughing bridesmaids and ushers, armed with old shoes and rice, took possession of the path. No one thought of being sad. The brilliant side of matrimony was seen in all its perfection, and, amid smiles and hearty wishes, fond kisses and close embraces, the bride and groom reached the carriage and were driven away.

Then the young people returned to the lawn, where dancing was in order, and the elders wandered over the beautiful house and grounds and exchanged confidences.

"The most beautiful wedding I ever saw!" was the remark heard everywhere. Mrs. Roland, having recovered sufficiently to be present at the ceremony, was now going slowly from room to room examining the wedding presents and the trousseau, which were to be packed and forwarded by professional packers.

Everybody had something pleasant to say to her, either about her recovery or her lovely nursing whom she had just seen married. Mrs. Roland had one answer:

"She deserved a good husband, and now she has him. Oh, I'm not feeling that they'll be long away in the West. The doctor told me that if the place didn't agree with Miss Mel he wouldn't stay in it."

"Were you very much surprised, Mrs. Roland?" asked Mrs. Gaston, who felt anxious to obtain opinions concerning this strange wedding.

"Not so much!" was the slow answer. "I think the doctor always had a leaning that way. He never had anything to do with the young women of the place. He couldn't help loving Miss Mel. She's the best-hearted girl I ever knew."

"I am sure of that," said Mrs. Gaston, who felt quite relieved at Mrs. Roland's views. Bache Mowbray had settled an income on his pet niece.

"I know something about the money matters of professional men," he explained to his family. "They often wait indefinitely for their pay, and this amount will keep a roof over the young people and help them to be practical in their housekeeping."

Meanwhile, the young people were silently contemplating each other in the carriage as it rapidly approached the station.

"So far so good," said Dr. Barclay. "How do you feel?"

"Oh, as if I could fly! How shall I ever repay you? These few weeks have passed like magic."

"You haven't had time to think."

"No. I have acted like an automaton."

"Now, let us get interested in the scenes we pass through. The less you think the better. Remember, this is a new existence. Is there any place of note that you would like to visit on our way? We can stop over and take a peep at it." He opened his railroad map, and they studied it together and returned to it again after taking the train and leaving Bayham behind.

"I wonder if I shall ever see it again," said Melusina suddenly, watching the distant town.

"Of course you will, just as soon as it can be visited with safety. Come, let us consider our dinner and where we shall eat it in New York."

"Are you really hungry?"

"I hope to be by six o'clock."

"I am going to call you Richard at once."

"I am glad to hear that."

"Suppose you buy a new magazine."

"That's a good idea. We must be a month behind the age."

"Yes, we haven't thought far beyond our own little world for a long time."

"That same little world required all the brains I had, I can assure you."

"You have done wonders, Richard; if you always work so successfully, you will accomplish all your desires."

He colored under her grave look of approval. Thus they journeyed, like friends who fully trusted in each other, interested and often amused, always charmed by the novelty of their experience. They reached their destination by easy stages and found their new home in the hands of a temporary caretaker whom Dr. Dalton had left in charge. The house had been recently built, and was quite attractively appointed and situated in a good neighborhood, sufficiently close to the business centre.

The new owners set to work to enhance the charms already existing, and Mrs. Barclay's taste was soon everywhere noticeable. Time never

hung heavily on the hands of this sensible couple. They explored in their leisure moments all the sights of the city and the surrounding country, and within a few months knew more about the place and its possibilities than many of its old residents.

The beauty of the scenery, the purity of the atmosphere and the spirit of the community impressed them. The rapidity of the business growth of the city sounded like a fable, but there were the statistics, and the busy progress was all about them.

Having communicated with his grandfather and gained the old man's consent, Barclay bought ground in a beautiful location away from the city noises and built his private hospital. It was an experiment, but it succeeded.

His fame as a specialist in treating one class of diseases grew steadily, and with his general practice he found all his time, strength and skill in demand. He was an ideal physician, handsome, healthy in mind and body, sincere, sympathetic and devoted to his profession. His wife was his most enthusiastic admirer and assistant, helping him in ways suggested by her intuitive knowledge of his theories and their requirements to reduce them to practice.

They had no secrets in the financial line. They began with a system of close economy and kept a clear account of their expenses, and set themselves a limit that they were careful not to exceed.

His care for her comfort and her interest in all that concerned him made them constant companions when he was not attending to his regular duties.

His office was on one side of the wide hallway that divided the house, but when the doors were open he had a view of her especial room, where she kept her piano, her needlework and her writing table. It was brilliant with her beautiful wedding presents, and made a fitting background for her lovely presence.

They dined in the library and kept

the parlor for casual visitors and patients awaiting their turn to enter the office.

When they had been married two months they had a visit from Bache Mowbray. He was delighted with everything, and spent a happy week with his beloved niece.

She looked so well and appeared so perfectly contented in her new home that he could not help asking her if she did not at times suffer from homesickness.

"I haven't had an opportunity," she said, gaily. "You see, uncle, a doctor is so differently situated from a business man. If Richard went away in the morning and came home in the evening, I should feel lonely, in spite of my house duties and my amusements. As it is, I am never alone for very long at a time, and then I have my letters from home to read and reply to. I always feel that I know exactly what is going on there at every hour in the day."

"Certainly, your husband made a magnificent move, so far as his chances as a physician are concerned. This is like a different world."

"He is enthusiastic over his prospects here. Bayham was remarkable for the absence of any opportunity whatever."

"I wish the whole family could see you now as I do. However, I will give them a graphic picture of your comfort here. We haven't settled down yet to the fact that you have really left us and cannot come to us except for a visit. We never actually had time to realize all that this marriage meant. It was all over so quickly that it seems yet like a waking dream. Your Aunt Kate will be delighted to hear my report."

"You must tell her how I enjoy this piano. I spend hours at it every day."

"Ah, yes! Music fills many a void."

"It takes me home again." Her eyes filled. "Now, I am giving you a wrong impression. I want to be here—with Richard Barclay."

"That is just right, child."

She put her arms about his neck and kissed him.

In describing this scene to Mrs. Gaston, Mr. Mowbray admitted that when in repose Melusina's features had a sad expression, that vanished when she spoke.

"Do you mean that her thoughts are disagreeable? She used to think only of pleasant things and people."

"I shouldn't like to make such an assertion," was the thoughtful reply. "The girl must miss the atmosphere of a dozen happy companions."

X

THAT year the wonderful white Winter of the West set in early. From her pleasant rooms Melusina watched the drifting snow and admired its varying effects. Sleighing proved to be a charming recreation, and every day the doctor drove his wife over the frozen roads to enjoy the crisp air and the beauties of the scenery in its Winter aspect.

One evening Melusina did not, as usual, occupy her pretty room, and the doctor, who was very busy preparing a paper on his specialty, glanced from time to time across the hall at the dark, quiet apartment. Finally he ran up stairs and knocked at her door. The connecting rooms over the parlors were hers exclusively, and he entered her dressing-room to find her seated before the open fire looking very white and nervous.

"Why didn't you call me?" he said, quickly. "You should not be alone if you are feeling ill."

"I have been thinking," she said, gently.

She put her hand on his as he sat down near her and regarded her with his keen, professional look. He took her hand and held it, and her beautiful eyes met his firmly.

"I wish you would come down and play me the 'Overture to Melusina.' It really is true that when I hear music my mind works with greater clearness—the words that I need

come to me quickly. I cannot fully describe the effect that your playing has on my mentality, but I know the results."

"But, Richard, I want to speak to you very seriously. I have been looking forward. I could not help it. This is what troubles me. I want to die; my death will free you of a terrible trust."

"Melusina!" Pain and reproach mingled in his voice.

"But I must speak! Let me, while I can. Just this once, Richard."

"Well?"

"If I die—and it lives—what will you do with it? Oh, if I could die before—before—that has been my prayer. You have been so good to me! Surely, God will reward you by taking such a heavy burden from you."

"Do I act as if you burdened me, Melusina?"

"No; you are all kindness. But I realize more and more, every day it grows clearer to me, the sacrifice that you have made for me. If ever a man deserved a pure, devoted wife, you do."

"Why not wait until I complain—?"

"Ah, no. Your complaint—that I could not survive."

"There is no danger of such a thing. You do more for me than I can explain to you. If you will simply be cheerful, so as not to put upon me a care that I cannot relieve, all will go well. You are in perfect health. I watch you as I would an exotic. Still, if you have misgivings, why, I shall try to set them at rest. Should you be taken from me, Melusina—I pray God you will be spared to me—the little creature that you leave will be mine to cherish and protect. It shall have my name or yours. Now, are you satisfied?"

"Yes. You are indeed a good man to me."

"As you are a good woman to me, Melusina. Let things come quietly, and do not excite yourself with these questions. I have found a very capa-

ble nurse for you, and she might as well come here to-morrow. Then you need never be alone, day or night. Now, you will come down, I am sure, and play for me; or would you be willing to lie on the couch in the office while I work at my paper? It ought to be mailed to-morrow morning."

"I think I should like to stay near you. Sometimes I grow frightened, I feel so very lonely; but I may disturb you, distract your thoughts—"

"Some of them never wander from you, so that the nearer you are to me the more contented I feel about you."

"I will come then, of course."

She rose, drawing her hand from his as she moved. He recovered it, speaking earnestly:

"Melusina, why will you not try to understand my position toward you? I am your protector. You give me something that was wanting in my life. A man may have dreams of beautiful things that are to him unattainable. I had those visions, I craved their realization in vain until you came to me. Suppose I desired a lovely picture and at length was able to buy it. You create about me the atmosphere that makes existence a delight. Your presence is to me inspiring. The book you put down, the work you handle, the very music that you play, all these are to me sacred and invaluable. You make my home a haven of rest and quiet. Why should you desire to leave me? Rather pray to remain with me and help me in this work that I have undertaken. Life is a trust; each one of us can make it a blessing to others."

"I wish I could believe that I might become a blessing. Often I fear I have cursed your whole future."

"Let us see how much I can accomplish this evening with you near me. You could look up some terms for me and save me some minutes."

"Oh, that will be charming!"

The medical dictionary proved prosaic and soporific, but Melusina discovered that Richard found copying to be very tedious labor, and she proposed to make duplicates of his papers

in her spare moments. The work interested and pleased her and filled up many an hour with cheerful effort.

The weeks went by.

The hour arrived when she became the mother of a lovely boy, strong and fair as herself. Richard had retained an older physician to attend her, but Melusina was aware that her husband was constantly at her side, soothing her with smiles and encouraging looks and words, and inspiring her with self-control.

Afterward the nurse told her that she had never seen a husband so devoted and so delighted with a child.

"He comes in many a time when you are asleep and holds it tenderly. Some men are just satisfied to look at the infant while it is so little."

Melusina felt great tears welling to her eyes, and then Mrs. Pettit put the little one beside her and bustled away to attend faithfully to her many duties.

The child restored the mother's equanimity. Melusina returned its shadowy smiles with tender caresses and clung to the tiny creature that depended upon her for nourishment and love. The whole warmth of her strong affections centred in the child, and her bright smiles, gay voice and musical laughter gradually, and almost unconsciously, returned to her.

The doctor came and went, elated with the result of his chosen experiment. His fondness for the baby perplexed and yet contented her. It was the never-failing source of care and interest. As it developed it showed a preference for Richard. If he entered the room the child would coo and laugh and stretch its small arms toward him to be taken and petted. The advances of a little child are irresistible, and the small Dick completely subjugated the elder one. Then the boy was beautiful and resembled his mother.

Melusina was no longer lonely, and her many duties kept her mind busy and her soul ever working in its care for others.

Richard depended upon her companionship in his few leisure hours

and confided to her all his thoughts and plans in connection with his profession.

The severity of the Winter had prevented any visits from the East and also made correspondence difficult and irregular. Where peace dwells life progresses with happy monotony and time passes imperceptibly in the regular recurrence of daily duties.

Dick was trying to walk when Rupert and Dolores arrived, on their wedding trip. Their short stay was a continuous festival. The women were inseparable and laughed frequently as they talked.

Rupert went about with Richard and saw his work with enthusiasm. His own plan was unchanged; he was still intent on literature and the calling of an editor.

One day the men had been investigating the many business interests of the city and visiting its principal buildings. Rupert was surprised at the extent of the place and the wonderful beauty of its situation. At the dinner table the conversation turned to the subject of his own future, and Melusina said, half-jokingly:

"Why don't you settle here? You could go into a newspaper office at a nominal salary until you understand the business. Then you could establish a paper or a magazine of your own. You can find capital to back you, and Richard is always telling me that if a man of ability can bring a sufficient amount of money here to start him in his enterprise success is certain."

Dolores gazed rapturously at Rupert.

"What an inspiration!" she cried.

Richard looked earnestly at Melusina and Rupert took up the suggestion seriously.

"The truth is, Mel, that we all live in the expectation of having you return to the East. We talk of you as being in New York. I think that if I should propose coming here, both father and mother would feel as if their children were deserting them. You might just as well be in New York." He turned to Richard.

"I could practice as well there as

here, but I could not become so well established for many years. My hospital draws patients from the East. They are sent to me by physicians who know the peculiarities of this climate. I don't know how your sister feels about making a change. My success here has made me fond of the place and the people. It was an experiment, coming here, and it succeeded. I have not considered the question of leaving."

"Well, before I sit down to think carefully over Mel's proposition you and she must decide as to whether you intend to remain here permanently. Of course, if you two are fixtures here Dolores and I would be powerfully attracted to the place. I should enjoy trying life in the midst of so much that is novel and beautiful."

"Then let us all sleep upon the idea," said Melusina. "There is no hurry in the matter."

That evening, when Richard was occupied in his office, he was not surprised to see Melusina enter. She stood at his table, looking down upon him and putting her hand upon his shoulder.

"Richard, do you wish to go back to the East?"

"I do not."

"I felt sure of that."

"Do you?"

"I don't know. It would be lovely to be near them all, wouldn't it—to have them come and go and see Dick while he is a baby." She sat down, flushing painfully. "I often think of it. I must some day endure this strain; perhaps the sooner the better. There is one horrible dread always before me. Here I am so safe. This is a sanctuary."

"This is your home."

"Yes—a home indeed."

"Would you like to pay your people a visit? Take the nurse with you. The ordeal would be short and over, once for all."

"Oh, I don't know."

She lay down and rested her cheek in her hand.

"What troubles you?"

"Oh, so many things! I couldn't trust myself away from you. Dolores tells me that they all feel a little hurt with us for not having mother here with me when Dick was born."

"Oh, well, you can tell her that the weather was severe and traveling dangerous at that time."

"I did. They think I should have been home before now on a visit. I told Dolores that you could not possibly leave your practice, and that I could not think of taking such a trip without you."

"That is right and proper. How would it do to invite your people to come here, one or two at a time, and see you in your own home? The whole problem would thus be solved. The change would please them, and you will avoid all risks of losing what we have worked so famously to win."

"And Rupert and Dolores may conclude to remove here."

"That would make you very happy."

"I think it would increase my happiness. Richard, I *am* happy, thanks to you."

"And Dick?"

"Richard, your prayer was granted. Why, I wonder?"

"To reward me, I think. My home is complete."

"You are always so cheerful, so busy, so contented."

"Why not? Work satisfies my nature. Then, as for lovely pictures, you and the child are always forming them."

"And you believe that you will always be willing to live like this?"

"The future again! Melusina, is there anything the matter with the present?"

"Not if you are contented."

"I am, quite."

"So, then, we are to be fixtures."

XI

DR. BARCLAY'S duties were very absorbing. His intense devotion to his specialty led him to make voluminous notes, which he afterward ar-

ranged for reference and publication. This work occupied him so constantly that he lived very much in his study, and unless Melusina brought her work there he met her only at the table or when they went for a drive. In her walks with Dick he seldom had time to join.

Gradually it dawned upon him that her voluntary visits to his study with her sewing or book had become so rare that he could recall the days on which they took place. No matter how busy he might be, he was always keenly aware of her presence. Her tall, beautiful figure, seated so gracefully, and the dainty dress she was adorning for the child or the book she read were fixed in his consciousness, although his eyes were on his paper.

Her absence first worried him and then alarmed him. He left his pen one afternoon and stepped into her room.

There was a hammock stretched in one corner of the large apartment, and Dick was in it taking his regular nap. Melusina was standing at the window, apparently enjoying her garden, which was brilliant with Spring blossoms. Richard stood for a moment, and she turned to meet his glance. Her eyes had the far-away look in them that indicated the problem of the future in debate.

"Do you want me to copy a paper? I haven't done any work for you for a long time."

"I have one nearly ready, thank you. However, it was not that. I notice that you have given up sitting near me when I am at work. Why?"

"I have been trying for some time to find the courage to tell you."

"I always gave you credit for plenty of courage—moral and mental, as well as physical."

"I fear I haven't much of any kind just now."

He sat down and leaned back, gazing calmly into her face as she stood regarding him. Then he offered her his hand, and she took it between both her own hands.

"Yes, we are friends, Richard, and

so I will confide in you. Here is the truth: We should not continue this existence. I am a living lie!"

"Melusina! What has happened to you?" Richard sprang to his feet, and then, recovering himself, spoke gently, drawing her to the sofa: "Tell me what you mean."

"Just that. This is not the life that you deserve."

"We have been all over that ground. Do I seem unhappy or dull? Come, put all of these ideas from you, once for all."

"But I cannot."

"But what is at the bottom of all this?"

"Do you remember what Uncle Bache said about the 'prerogative of youth?'"

"Yes; I knew when he made that remark that I should hear of it again from you. Now, say everything you can think of on the subject."

She sighed as she gazed at him.

"You are still young enough, Richard, to take advantage of it. Tell me, think for me. How can we undo what we have done, so as to leave you free to marry for love one who loves you in return? Every time I see Rupert and Dolores together I feel how deeply I am wronging you! Oh, Richard, you are so good, so generous! Must you lose all that makes life valuable, you who deserve every blessing that it holds? I cannot bear this remorse! I let you sacrifice yourself for me. Now, let me rid you of the burden. I have thought of several ways. I might confess all to Uncle Bache, and ask him to take Dick and me to live with him. Uncle Bache would keep my secret, and we could get one of those divorces that are given for incompatibility of temperament. Then you could marry."

Richard stood up and paced the floor. At times he stopped near the hammock and watched Dick's pink cheeks and dark eyelashes, the Cupid lips and rings of sunny hair.

"What exquisite coloring!" he said, gently. "I never realized until Dick came to us the wonderful fascinations of childhood."

"You should have children to recompense you."

"You seem so troubled about my deserts. Melusina, for my sake you would nearly kill that good uncle of yours, who believes you a supremely happy woman. We will assume that he would preserve your confidence. Do you suppose that it would benefit me, a reputable physician, to be known as having a divorced wife in one part of the world and a second wife in my home? Do you believe that I would marry a woman whose principles would permit her to accept me under such circumstances? On the contrary, I took you for better or for worse, and I have never, for one second even, thought of regretting my marriage."

"But it is such a mockery!"

"Oh, no. Many a couple who married for love have outlived the passion and are not as good friends to-day as we are. Tell me, Melusina, have I forfeited any of your respect since our wedding-day?"

"No. You have won my esteem—my faith in your sincerity has increased. It is I—oh, Richard! how can I forgive myself?"

"But you should have charity for yourself, Melusina. You were very young, impressionable, filled with faith in others. I have studied you very closely in these four years of our married life. Your mentality had nothing to do with your grievous error. You were not tempted by any appeal to your moral perceptions or to your reason. Your affections and emotions were worked upon. There is no purer-minded woman living to-day than yourself. I recognize the fact in your mother-love, in your devotion to your duties here." He took her hands tenderly and spoke sadly. "To break up my home, Melusina, will be to injure me beyond measure. We are very well off here; my work progresses beautifully. Why shatter it now? You have never treated me with deception, therefore if I wanted to complain I have no cause. On the contrary, my home is far beyond anything that I had pictured to myself,

and you are its guardian spirit. If I have aided you, Melusina, you have so materially assisted me that we can simply rest satisfied with results."

"You are so helpful, Richard!"

"I mean to be. To see you sad, or even depressed, is a reproach to me. I feel that I am neglecting my trust."

"No; you are over-considerate. I wish I could see things with your coolness of judgment."

"It is force of habit. I have learned to dissect and analyze human thought and emotions, as well as the material parts of our being. You must be aware, as well as I am, that passion on your side was wholly wanting in your relations with the man who deserted you."

"I know now that my ignorance was the real cause of my misfortune. Aunt Kate undertook to chaperon me that Winter, but she did not realize how I had been educated. I thought that love was a mental ecstasy, a dream of the soul."

"So it is."

"I thought my lover a wonder of perfection, a hero like those I had met in books. I did not believe that he would injure me."

"You had a child's innocence and confidence in him."

"Yes, the most absolute confidence."

"Melusina, be happy here with what I can give you. It is, at least, a safe haven. Try to forgive yourself your girlish fault, which was really the result of carelessness in those who had charge of you. If I have your esteem, be bright and contented as my sweet sister and friend. Let us put away all depressing, morbid ideas. My ambition is so fully gratified by the recognition that my work is winning that I often wish you could share the delight with me. However, you have no taste for the details of medicine."

"I can rejoice in your satisfaction, and I know that you deserve the fame you have won. My life is valueless when compared with yours."

"On the contrary, your work is the most valuable that is done in this

world. You have the training of a little pure soul. If Dick lives, a good man will bless the world with his honest ways!"

"He loves you more than he loves me."

"Because he sees less of me. Once he becomes my little shadow, he will think the most of you."

"I prefer it as it is."

"He is a blessing to both of us."

"I know that. I should not like to die and leave him, he is so affectionate and lovely. If only——"

"Now, don't dwell on such thoughts."

"But this sense of the injustice to you is never absent from me, Richard."

"What am I to do with you? Would you like to go East for the Summer? Dick would enjoy the seashore, and no doubt Rupert would be willing to let Dolores and the baby join you. I am sure your people would be delighted, and, once you are away from me, you will naturally take a more comprehensive view of our position here and the necessity of retaining the respect in which we are held. We have slowly built up a home, with all its honest surroundings, its healthful influences. You know we agreed that the reason of our marriage should remain our secret forever. You must learn to control your thoughts—to put the matter wholly out of your mind."

"If I could!"

"I can and do forget it. I interest myself in the pressing duties of to-day, and I dream of future results. I can at times recall the past, but I force myself to review what was agreeable and useful in it. Now you, too, have unceasing occupations. You can really always forget everything by taking up your little child and becoming his companion. Melusina, you are a good, Christian woman. Practice your faith. Do right, and be willing to leave the future to Him who has helped us to our present condition of peace. You must realize that we have saved others from bitter, endless sorrow, and we are not

deteriorating ourselves. We don't live on a dead level, we are climbing. You are as much entitled to forgiveness as any other person who errs. We all believe that if we repent we receive pardon and peace. I am sure you are sorry for what has happened, and I think you have suffered sufficiently in your self-condemnation. A change of scene may be the very thing you need to cause the reaction in your mental condition. Your soul is so pure, so transparent, that all you require is to think calmly of the consequences of actions that involve the rights and welfare of others."

"Richard, I would not willingly injure you."

"I know it."

"Would you be able to go East with us?"

"I might take you there and return for you."

"I don't know how that would suit us all."

"Well, think over the plan. Come, now, and copy for me. Get your mind off of this subject."

"Oh, I wish it were possible!"

"You must conclude that God forgives you, then forgive yourself. If you can make excuses for those who fall into temptation, try to have pity for yourself. Recall what you were when you met this man, and his treatment of you. Do you suppose that he feels any remorse for his conduct toward you?"

"I hope he does."

"I venture to say that he has forgotten the whole matter. Melusina, things in this world are not all on a right basis. That man should be hounded from society, yet he, if the circumstances had been published, would have gone free, and you would have been the object of censure. I believe that men will be held responsible for all such deeds of infamy, and I think that society should demand from men the personal purity that they exact from women in order to enjoy social recognition. The subject is a vast one, but in a case like yours the man was more to be condemned than you, and if he escaped

penalty, you deserved to be shielded. Suppose we both agree to forget the evil and be happy in the blessings that we enjoy."

Melusina followed him to his study and occupied herself with his notes and manuscripts, gradually recovering her self-control.

XII

FOR several days the sadness and depression in Melusina's appearance and manner proved to Barclay that her thoughts still dwelt upon her strange position and its complexities. It occurred to him that she was losing sight of her personal griefs and trying to sound the depths of his possible desires and disappointments in his matrimonial experiment. Here was change, if not progress. He exerted himself to prove that his content was all that he had claimed for it, but it pained him to realize that his cheerfulness seemed to intensify her sense of the unreality of their existence. He dreaded the effects of her self-reproaches and vainly longed for some way to prove to her the mistake she was making by indulging in them. One afternoon, as he was starting on a long drive into the suburbs, she turned the corner of the porch, alone and dressed for walking.

"Can I take you part of your way," he said, gaily, and she accepted the proffered seat. She made no effort to talk, however, neither did she say where she wished to alight. She seemed to be enjoying the rapid motion, the bright streets and the silence of the strong man at her side.

"I was only going to shop—I think I prefer this," she remarked in answer to a quick glance from Dr. Barclay. It was dusk when they turned homeward. Dr. Barclay was intent on the dangers to be avoided and also preoccupied with his unceasing doubts about his patients. He did not notice an open carriage in which several men sat smoking as it slowly passed his in the crowded thoroughfare. A moment after a suppressed moan made him

turn to catch Melusina falling toward him in a dead faint. He thrilled with pain and fright. His fears for her were not groundless. She would fret herself ill; all his care for her would be of no avail. This collapse resulted from a mental strain, he said to himself. These ideas tortured him as he turned into a side street, stopped the horse, and attended to his unconscious companion. He tried to reassure her and make light of the whole matter, even joking about the advantages of a doctor's care in such emergencies. Melusina revived slowly, gazed at him in a dazed way and then stared about her with utter horror in her eyes. The increasing dusk evidently soothed her. She tried to draw down a veil that Dr. Barclay had carefully removed, and then sighed "Home."

When they reached it and he lifted her to the ground it was evident to both that she could not walk, so he carried her into his office and made her comfortable in his easy-chair. Later on he assisted her into the dining-room and ate his dinner, while she let everything be taken away untasted.

Physician that he was, Dr. Barclay was baffled. He rapidly recalled the incidents of the drive, her appearance when they had left his last patient's house. She was perfectly well then. He had described the case to her—it was that of an infant. Could it be that he had frightened her? He regarded her critically. She was trembling with emotion of some kind. Some tremendous change had come over her, and her thoughts were increasing the excitement under which she was laboring. She looked at him; her cheeks were flushed, her eyes blazing.

"What is it all about? You have had a shock. Surely, Melusina, you are not worrying about Dick?"

"Dick!"

She rose with a shrill cry and hurried up stairs to the child's crib, where he slept profoundly. The sight had a soothing influence. The nurse left the room, and Dr. Barclay closed the doors and watched Melusina.

She was walking about the rooms,

drawing down the window-shades. She spoke rapidly:

"When people get very much excited do they say things that they should keep to themselves?"

"Yes. I'll get you something to quiet your nerves."

She drank the mixture and shook her head at him.

"I don't believe it will help me."

"Yes, it will. Come, sit down."

"Oh, I can't; I feel desperate—my brain is on fire—I can scarcely breathe!"

He spoke gently, but this emotional woman was more of a problem than the girl Melusina.

"Years ago you confided in me, and, for your own sake, I advised you to exert your self-control, to conquer your feelings, and be guided entirely by reason."

"Yes, I know." She clasped her hands, speaking wildly. "You brought me here—it has been a sanctuary."

"Home is a sanctuary, Melusina—"

"Yes, but I do not make your home what it should be! I am not fit to be here! I despise myself. You would despise me if you knew the thoughts that fill my brain—the mad fancies—hopes— Oh, I wish you would go away—"

"I will. But, Melusina, the necessity for this self-repression that is exhausting you has passed. You are not obliged to act for my benefit. I would much rather hear you crying than to see your bitter struggle to suppress your grief. Here you are at liberty to indulge in tears, if they will give you relief. Trouble like yours is not overcome and outlived easily. I am not requiring impossible things from you."

"Oh, but you are!" she cried, despairingly. "You expect me to stay here!"

Dr. Barclay felt stunned. Melusina seated herself, apparently frightened at her own words.

Dr. Barclay spoke with deliberation.

"Melusina, you are in no condition to discuss the question of leaving my

protection. Listen! You have eaten nothing since lunch. Rest for an hour and eat something. I will send it up to you. To-morrow or next day we will think up some sensible way out of this situation. The work-a-day world has to be faced, you know, and our private arrangements can be made quietly, without giving rise to gossip."

He held out his hand.

Melusina shrank from his touch and hid her burning cheeks with her slender hands. Her eyes were downcast.

How well he recalled the attitude! Completely mystified, he left the room and went to his study. But the work-a-day world receded, and Dr. Barclay lived over again his efforts to shield the beautiful woman who now demanded her freedom.

He had sent up some light edibles, and at midnight still sat in his study, absorbed in his problem. What had happened to Melusina? All at once he was aware of her entrance, pale, clear-eyed, reason again in the ascendancy. She spoke sadly:

"Richard, I am very sorry for causing you all this anxiety and uneasiness. You have been too good to me. I should be able by this time to keep my troubles to myself, but the shock of seeing him to-day, passing so close to me that I feared he would see me—perhaps speak to me—completely unnerved me. The past came back with a vividness that crushed me. I thought I would not tell you—but—"

"But I am glad that you did. Scoundrel as he is, he will not dare to speak to you. As for meeting him, that was a possibility that had to be faced."

"Oh, but I wish it had not happened! I am more convinced than ever that I should not be here."

"Do you mean—?"

"Don't ask me what I mean! Only help me again. If I could get away from everything—everybody—for a time!"

"But, Melusina, if you intend another struggle for self-conquest, why not stay right here? I will not intrude upon you; you are the mistress

of the house—you can come and go unquestioned. You cannot get away from yourself even among strangers, and for your sake more than for my own I prefer you to remain where I can protect you—to at least stay under my roof." He spoke sternly. Melusina grew even paler and shivered. "While that wretch lives you are safer at my side than anywhere else in the world."

"That is true." She gave him a strange look. "I deserve to suffer."

"I think we have both suffered enough."

"You have, certainly, through me."

"Melusina, the only pain you ever caused me has been the thought of losing you. Now, try to reconcile yourself to this existence. It may be commonplace, perhaps monotonous, but it brings peace."

She turned quickly and left the room.

Dawn found Dr. Barclay still pondering the sentences that Melusina had uttered in her excitement.

It seemed very clear to him that the sight of her lover had revealed to her the fact that she still cared for him, in spite of her struggle to forget him.

XIII

DR. BARCLAY had made a custom of going to the hospital after supper for a final inspection of his patients. It so happened that one evening, as he was on the point of leaving his home, he remembered some memoranda that he needed, so he closed the door and returned to his study. Going to a desk, he sat down to collect his papers. He had not turned up the light, and a screen partly concealed the desk. In the silence Melusina entered the room and sat down in his chair at the large centre table.

He rapidly understood that she had heard him open and shut the door, and supposed herself to be alone. Her actions attracted him. She took up the many little accessories of the work-table, gently rearranged them, and now and then held them to her

lips or pressed them to her cheeks. Presently she put her arms on his table, laid her head upon them and gave way to tears.

He controlled the impulse to speak to her, and remained an amazed spectator of her emotion. After some time she rose and went into the front parlor, where she stood by the window, apparently watching for his return.

Her figure in the moonlight was perfectly visible, as he lightly crossed the hall and left the house by the rear entrance. He pursued his walk to the hospital mechanically. His mind was in a state of bewilderment, his heart was throbbing wildly.

When he reached his destination he looked up at the dimly lighted windows, thought of the quiet sufferers, and felt that he was not in a condition to face them. He passed the gate, walked rapidly for some distance, and found himself in the open country.

Melusina's face and figure haunted him. What could her emotions mean? The trip to the East was under discussion, but not as yet decided upon. Perhaps she feared to take it. But that would not explain her grief, her pretty hands caressing senseless books and pens, her presence in his room. Then he recalled her sensitive lips touching his well-worn cases and pencils. He thrilled when he thought of a possible explanation of what he had witnessed. If that were so! Impossible! He laughed bitterly at his mad hope. But it seized and held him and filled him with the desire to comprehend Melusina's thoughts.

He knew that she respected him, but that would not move her to caress the utensils of his work. He recalled her reserve, her timidity, her grave, shy dignity of manner with him. When she played with Dick she always changed to a laughing, light-hearted girl, the Melusina of the past.

As he pondered the situation he grew curious, excited, determined to learn more of her unspoken wishes and fears.

He returned slowly, calming him-

self as he reached the hospital, where he forced himself to perform his duties with more than his usual thoroughness.

As he approached his home he saw Melusina at the parlor window, but when he entered she had disappeared. Further search in her sitting-room and his study proved that she had gone up stairs. Her avoidance roused him; such a thing was new and unaccountable.

He knocked at her door, and she answered by opening it. The room was dark; the hall light shone on her beautiful, sensitive features; and in her white house dress she seemed to him more statuesque and remote than ever.

"I saw you at the window, and I want to have a little talk with you."

"Shall we go down stairs?"

Her voice was just audible, and he had noticed a soft flush called up by his first words.

"Oh, yes; the lights are burning, and then it is pleasant to see your face when we are together."

He turned into her sitting-room and she followed, sat down near a work-table and commenced arranging her silks.

"Some remarkable new patient, I suppose?" she said, with studied ease. "You look quite worked up about the case."

"So I am, but I am the patient, and I have sought you to help me."

She started and gazed earnestly at him.

"You are not ill, Richard?"

"Not in body. I am perplexed."

"Dear me! A scientist like you?"

"There are a few problems that science cannot solve."

"What can?"

"A woman's heart."

She flushed and bent over her busy fingers, her eyes avoiding his.

"Be careful. You may ascribe to it powers that it does not possess." Her voice was steady.

"You know what I mean; intuition, love, sympathy—these will solve what is baffling me."

"Then why come to me? You

possess all these qualities to a greater degree than I do. You have exercised them all your life, and I, Richard, have for years tried to suppress them. No one needs them."

"Are you quite sure of what you are saying?"

"You know what I mean. Dick does not demand the exact depths of feeling that you refer to. Why don't you try to develop your own gifts? Mine are so inferior."

"If I reach a truth, and you know that I am right, will you admit it?"

"Yes, provided you assure me that my admission will benefit you."

"I told you that I am here for help."

"Don't you know that I would be only too happy to serve you?" Her thoughtful tones roused him.

"I'm not thinking of balancing kindnesses. Another idea has taken possession of me." He stood up, speaking resolutely. "Melusina, how can flesh and blood impress marble? Tell me, do you want to go away from me for several months?" He stood close to her. She glanced at him, flushed, and hesitated.

"I think you do not."

"Is this the admission?"

"Part of it."

"You are right."

Her efforts to remain calm were perfectly apparent to him. He put his hand on hers gently, but she started and drew back. His fingers closed more firmly, and their eyes met. His were searching.

"You see my intuition was correct. Melusina, the emotions that you think were suppressed I believe have turned into another channel. For God's sake, if you love me, put your arms around me and kiss me."

She rose and put her arms around his neck; her lips touched his. He held her passionately, pressing kisses on her eyes and lips, silent, overwhelmed with his discovery and his happiness.

She spoke gravely, her brilliant eyes fixed on his:

"Will this knowledge make you happier? Oh, Richard, I feel so un-

worthy, so humiliated. To give you all I have, and know that you, out of pity, accept the gift."

"Pity! Melusina! What is love, if I have not shown it for you? But I could not force my love where there was no place for it. Now—now—I am satisfied."

"And you have loved me all these years?"

"Ever since the moment that I held your hands in the water and saved you from death."

XIV

THE professional standing of Dr. Barclay rapidly increased with the prosperous growth of the city. His wife's social graces and the beauty of her children were among the usual topics of conversation when his name was mentioned. As the years passed, all of Melusina's relatives spent long, happy periods in her home, her younger sisters becoming so fond of the town that two of them married there and settled near her. Her mother was a frequent visitor, and even old Anthony Barclay and Richard's mother made pilgrimages to see their little grandchildren.

Life was charming for all these good people, and on both sides of the family Dick was the especial favorite. His disposition, as much as his beauty, won the admiration of all who came under his influence. He was sincere and warm-hearted, generous to a fault, and possessed of remarkable mental gifts. A born student, he made such a record at school that Richard concluded to let him prepare for Yale, and the day arrived when he and Melusina started for the East to establish Dick at his chosen college.

The three had a memorable trip, visiting friends on the way and enjoying all the places of interest on the route. Dick had never been separated from his parents, and parting came with pain to all. The lad had been Richard's constant companion, and was manly and well informed for his years. Mrs. Gaston agreed to re-

side in his vicinity and have a special watch over his health. Everybody was interested in Dick's welfare, and his college career was the great pivot on which the doings of his relatives turned. All celebrations were arranged to take place during Dick's vacations, and his arrivals and departures, his work and his progress, his prizes and his standing, provided everybody with agreeable topics of discussion.

A lad at college is a steady source of interest, and Richard was much amused at the effect of Dick's high standing upon Anthony Barclay. The old man seemed to renew his hold upon life, and bestirred himself to take advantage of a rise in Bayham real estate. To everybody's surprise, he developed a talent for speculating, and shrewdly managed to cut up his acres into building lots and obtain good prices for them. His great-grandchildren were to reap the benefit of his long life of frugality.

Dick became a favorite in Bayham, where he divided his short visits between the Mowbrays and the Barclays.

One day, shortly before the Thanksgiving holidays, Melusina was reading to Richard a letter from Dick. The boy had received so many invitations for the few days of vacation that he had referred the matter to his parents. He would join them if they preferred, and next to going home he would enjoy most a visit to his chum, whose family resided in New York. The lads wanted to see the football game in the afternoon and accept a dinner invitation for the evening. Melusina paused to decipher the chum's address. Richard grew meditative.

The scene was a charming one. Melusina had her youngest boy, Bache, a child of three, on her knees; her oldest daughter, Mel, was standing with her arm around her father's neck, and Kate was sitting at a table, listening attentively to Dick's plans. Kate was ten, fair and slender, and devoted to Dick. Mel had no hero but her father.

"What do you think, dear?" Rich-

ard said. "Dick evidently wants to see the game. I'd like to be there myself."

"I can't imagine a holiday without Dick," Melusina said, looking at the children. She smiled instantly. "How would it do to let Dick accept the invitation and for you to join him while the game is going on?"

"And leave you here with the babies? Mel wouldn't like me to be away on Thanksgiving, I know."

"But Yale and Princeton won't postpone a match to suit our notions. We could celebrate the day when you return. I wonder what kind of a boy this chum is! Have you seen him?"

"Yes, several times. He and Dick are inseparable. He is a little younger than our boy, very nice looking and, I should judge, quite studious. He was generally in Dick's room; they work together. The only objection I know of to their intimacy is the disparity in their means. Whitney is the only child of a millionaire, and his people live luxuriously, on Madison avenue, I think. However, Dick is a sensible, independent fellow, and I told him to let me know the moment he felt that his allowance was inadequate to his needs. He'll have to brush up against wealth one of these days, and he might just as well commence young."

"Papa," said Mel, "I wish you would go and see the match. You know you said yesterday that you ought to have a few days of rest."

"Did I? Oh, well, I felt tired, perhaps."

Melusina met his eyes. Her own were filled with a vague, rising expression of anxiety.

Richard laughed.

"Now you have startled mamma. I can foresee the result. I might as well telegraph to Dick and pack my valise. I'd like to put you all inside of it."

"Ah, but you're not a wizard," said Mel. "I wish you were!"

"Papa can take you, Mel. You would enjoy the rush and excitement, and you can buy your Winter wrap and hat in New York."

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When Dr. Barclay and his daughter returned from New York they had a great deal to tell about the pleasures of their trip, but they had only caught a glimpse of Dick, who had been completely monopolized by his host.

However, Dr. Barclay felt thoroughly rested, and Dick would come home for the Christmas holidays. No one was surprised when he wrote for permission to bring his friend, Ned Whitney, with him; and on a lovely December afternoon the young men arrived at the pretty house, and Dick presented his chum to his mother.

Whitney was tall and slender, and combined gray eyes with black hair and a very dark skin. His manner was unaffected and direct, and his interest in Dick's home and family seemed very sincere, almost absorbing.

Dick and he explored the city and surrounding country, and Whitney expressed great satisfaction with everything. They had their wheels and cameras, and the time slipped by like magic.

Dick informed his mother confidentially that Ned's home was a "fake."

"And what do you mean by that?" asked Melusina. "Your father told me that he was very well off."

The two were in Melusina's room; Whitney was on the lawn, with the children grouped before his camera, and Richard was assisting him.

"Well off! Why, they live in a palace. You know what I mean—they have everything that money can buy." Dick put his arms around his mother's neck. "There is something that you can't buy," he whispered. "Ned's mother spends her time in Europe, picking up bric-à-brac, and his father lives at clubs. Ned thinks this is a wonderful place. He says you are the most beautiful woman he ever saw. So you are. I stared at the people who were at the Horse Show in New York, and there wasn't anyone there that looked as you do."

"You are a good boy, Dick, to be so loyal to me. Your father's good-

ness is the secret of my happiness. One of these days, when you have a wife to think about, try to remember how your father makes those about him enjoy life."

"I know it. Now that I see how strangers live, I appreciate my own home. You don't know how much I think about you all. I work all the harder to avoid feeling homesick."

Melusina put her arms about him, gazing into his eyes, that were so like her own. "You know, dear, just how we feel about you. We want you to have every advantage, so that you can choose a profession fully equipped to meet all its demands."

"Yes, I know, and indeed, mother, I love my books. But I miss you."

"For my sake, Dick, you will take your father's advice in everything. That will be the way to please me most."

"You don't know how ambitious I am!"

"I know, dear boy; but, most of all, I want you to be good, like your father."

"I try to be, mother."

She kissed his frank, boyish face, and he felt her tears on his cheeks.

"Dear, I want you to promise me something."

"Yes, mother."

"It is this. I know how easy it is for young people to be tempted into doing foolish, perhaps wrong, things. I want you to promise me that you will tell us should any evil befall you. We are the proper ones to sympathize with you and help you. Dick, you have always been perfectly candid and confidential with us, and that was one reason why we felt we could trust you so far away from us."

"I do try to deserve your faith in me, mother. I promise. Now, you must come out and sit for me. I want a family group to take back with me. Put on something warm and a very small bonnet."

"A scarf will do. I can take it off when you are ready."

A moment later they crossed the lawn together, both laughing at some joke of Dick's, and Dr. Barclay

watched his wife's beautiful figure as she approached, her tall son keeping step with her gaily.

XV

DURING Dick's junior year his parents noticed, by many trifling incidents, that his intimacy with Whitney had gradually changed to a mere acquaintanceship. On one of his home visits Dick referred to it voluntarily, and made excuses for Whitney.

"It became a question of money between us," he said, frankly. "Whitney naturally fell in with the swagger crowd, as he had ample means and unlimited credit. I couldn't afford their methods and had to decline their invitations. Whitney didn't like my independence. He wanted to lend me money, and I refused to accept it. I don't feel like being under financial obligations even to a friend."

"You were very sensible. Eventually, you might lose your friend," Dr. Barclay said.

"Besides, I found that the outside attractions interfered with my study, and I made the stand just in the nick of time. I like Whitney, but I'm too ambitious to fritter away time as he does. He is not called upon to over-exert himself; he goes to college because it is the correct thing to be a college man. He doesn't intend to take up a profession, but expects to go into his father's office and learn the entire business. I want to take the course at the Law School, if you are willing. Grandpa Mowbray is in favor of it, and so is Grandfather Barclay."

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"You ambitious boy!" said Melusina. Dr. Barclay laughed heartily.

"You youngsters certainly look far enough ahead."

"Law is so beautiful in its theories," said Dick. "I listen to all the lectures I can make time to attend. We have several powerful speakers in the faculty, and a great many of my classmates will study law; so, of course, we let our thoughts take that direction. There are so many branches, too, in the practice of law, each calling for its own peculiar mental gifts. You can be a specialist in law and win reputation and fortune by becoming an authority on certain subjects. Grandpa Mowbray says that I can make rapid progress, not having to worry as to bread and butter."

"Then you won't be obliged to balance your conscience with your purse. Well, my boy, go ahead. I should enjoy having an honest lawyer in the family," said his father.

"I wish this break had not come between you and young Whitney," said Melusina.

"There was no help for it."

"Has anyone taken his place with you?"

"No. I've left it open. We are really as loyal as ever, but we see very little of each other. If I needed anything I should certainly go to Whitney, and if he were in any trouble I am sure he would confide in me. Our habits differ, and so we are no longer companions."

"I took such a fancy to him; he seemed so sincere and boyish."

"That accounts for our separation. He is friendly with everybody, and lavishes his money on a crowd of toadies that surround him like a little court. He enjoys their devotion and likes to be popular. He really liked you. He keeps that picture of you on his shelf. You know you stood alone for him that day we were all on the lawn taking photographs."

"Oh, yes. He posed me near the cedar, I remember."

"He got a beautiful picture of you. I wanted it, but he wouldn't part with it."

Soon after Dick's return to college a number of the students were taken ill, and the disease proved to be typhoid fever. Whitney was among the victims. Dick at once devoted himself to him, and their old attachment revived with increased strength. All the circumstances were very sad. Mr. and Mrs. Whitney were abroad, and so Dick telegraphed for Dr. Barclay, who hastened to New Haven, and learned with dismay that the case was considered hopeless. The young man lacked stamina, the physicians decided, and had no reserve force to fight the disease. He sank very rapidly from the first.

Dr. Barclay was a man who never gave up hope nor ceased his efforts, and he and Dick aided the physicians and nurses to their utmost ability. Whitney wanted Dick near him when conscious, and the pathetic sight of these fellow-students made a lasting impression on those who saw them together.

Toward the end Dick left his friend only for necessary rest and food, and to him Whitney confided his last wishes and farewells.

When the sad event was over Dick went home for change and recreation, and was away from college for some time. Into his mother's sympathetic ears he poured his grief, not only for Whitney's death but for the break that had ended their pleasant companionship.

Within the year the news of Mrs. Whitney's demise was chronicled. She had been prostrated by her son's death and had never recovered from the shock of losing him.

Dick graduated with high honors, and in the following year entered the Law School. He enjoyed his new pursuits and continued to deserve the admiration of his many relatives. His Uncle Bache was his constant visitor, and at long intervals Anthony Barclay would make a pilgrimage to New Haven and wander about the old town, gazing with much interest at the buildings with which he loved to associate his great-grandson.

About this time Dr. Barclay was

rejoicing in a fine addition to his hospital, and with his long years of zealous effort had come the fame and fortune that follow honest labor. His beautiful home had been enlarged as well, to meet the requirements of his growing family.

One evening in early Spring he was hastily summoned to attend a gentleman who had been taken ill on a train and removed to one of the hotels.

The invalid was a person of importance. Dr. Barclay was ushered at once to his room. The man was middle-aged, with traces of former beauty in his finely cut features and dark eyes, but he was emaciated and feeble to an alarming degree. He took an immediate fancy to Dr. Barclay, whose physical strength was magnetic in itself, and put himself entirely in the physician's care. He was made as comfortable as possible for the night, and on the next day was taken to a private room in the new hospital ward.

Late that evening Melusina was surprised to learn that the new patient was the father of young Whitney. She was reading in the library when Richard returned from his last visit for the night. He sat down before the open fire and became absorbed in meditation over the case. The children had just gone to bed, and the stillness was all that could be desired.

Melusina put aside the book and sat silent, watching the logs as they blazed and crackled. Her slender figure was thrown into full relief by the dark leathern chair; her head, with its masses of golden hair, rested easily against the tall back.

"Well, you witch, what are you thinking about?" Richard spoke abruptly, with affected gaiety.

"About you. Is it such a very bad case?"

He rose and faced her. "Hopeless. He may rally for a while, but his days are numbered."

"Does he know he will die?"

"No. That would be to hasten matters. I tell you, it is hard to see

a whole family wiped out of existence within such a short time. He isn't able to talk or see anybody, so I think I will not mention him as yet to Dick. It will only worry the young fellow and do no good."

"What a strange coincidence!"

"Yes; mere chance. He was on his way to Santa Barbara, by his physician's advice. He was quite delighted when he realized into whose hands he had fallen so suddenly."

"There is nothing so remarkable as reality."

Richard smiled at her and she suddenly rose and clasped her arms about his neck. He held her and bent silently to kiss her.

"You mustn't think about these sad problems, dear. If we knew all the circumstances the results might not seem so perplexing. Whitney has lived hard, although I judge he is not much older than I am. This making of money wears upon a man. I should prefer being a physician to being a capitalist."

"Who will inherit his millions?"

"Heaven knows!"

"He may have scores of needy relatives to whom the money might prove a blessing."

"Oh, there is generally somebody lying in wait for these hoarded fortunes. They become distributed in time, like the water in a reservoir. He can endow a college or help the innumerable institutions called charities. No doubt his will is made."

"Sometimes these very rich people put the matter off until too late."

"Just as well. The law settles the question very wisely. I'll let him talk to me as soon as he can do so with safety, and, of course, if his affairs are not in order I may suggest the propriety of arranging them, but I won't risk his little chance for life merely to have a will drawn up. No one welcomes death. Millionaires love to contemplate their securities and investments."

"Richard," said Melusina, smiling sadly, "a millionaire can be very poor, can't he?"

XVI

OWING to Dr. Barclay's skill and the unremitting attention of his nurses, Mr. Whitney rallied to a surprising degree, and some faint hope of his ultimate recovery visited his physician's anxious reveries. The doctor spent many an hour listening to his patient's rambling talks of his early life. These recitals seemed to give Mr. Whitney great relief, and so his listener would make occasional remarks to prove that he was interested, but endeavored always to lead the sick man's thoughts to pleasant topics when disagreeable ones were probable.

Richard often confided to Melusina the accounts he thus gathered, and she soon grew accustomed to his protracted visits to his exacting patient.

"He is becoming a positive charge," she said one evening. "Why doesn't he tell all these reminiscences to his nurses?"

"Because I have given them strict orders not to let him talk. He gets so close to being over-excited when I am with him that I cannot trust him if he once commences to confide in them. His little fund of strength would be used up in a short time, and exhaustion for him means death."

"Why is he so talkative? I didn't know that sick people cared to tell all their affairs to others."

"Some find in this their only relaxation. I think that Whitney is a man who has kept his troubles to himself. In his weak condition he is tempted to unbosom himself to any sympathetic listener. I don't care to hear him. He was recalling his matrimonial experiences this evening. I was astonished. It seems he married a woman who strongly objected to bearing children. In time she ruined her health. Such women seem to me so abnormal that it pains me to hear about them. His domestic happiness was wholly impossible; he and his wife drifted about, sometimes under one roof, often with the ocean separating them."

"She did not care for him, I suppose."

"I don't think such women are ca-

pable of deep affection. I am sorry to say that the type is a common one, and sadly on the increase. Wrecked homes are the result."

"Mr. Whitney is to be pitied."

"He seems to regret his choice in marriage. Thank God, Melusina, you and I have no regrets!"

"Because of your love for me, and mine for you."

"Yes. You see, dear, when I am sitting with poor Whitney I cannot help contrasting our conditions. You and I have had such peace together that the outside world never seemed to me a hard one in any sense of the word. With Whitney, life has been a succession of private and public struggles. I am debating sending for Dick. If I felt sure that Whitney would recover, it would not be worth while. I fear his death may happen any minute, and the excitement of seeing Dick might produce the result I dread."

"Do you think it would be a comfort to him to see Dick?"

"Yes; he often speaks of him and his fidelity to Ned."

"Perhaps, then, it would be better to have Dick come. Would the poor man care to see me?"

"No, he looks too wretched. He shrinks from the idea of meeting you under such circumstances. I proposed a little visit from you."

"Yet he hopes to recover."

"Yes. In spite of everything, he clings to life."

"Well, if he regains his health he can commence all over again."

"True."

"What a fund of experience he will have to protect him from future mistakes." Richard looked amused.

"If he can find an honest woman to assist him in the work he may yet enjoy life. Thus far he has sounded its worst depths. Somehow, I don't feel like bringing Dick face to face with so much misery. It can't do him any good, and it is risking a state of mental excitement that may reduce Whitney's chances for life. We'll let the boy enjoy his studies and freedom from care."

The next day, to everybody's de-

light and astonishment, Dick appeared, to spend a short vacation. He was prepared for Mr. Whitney's presence in the hospital, having seen personal notices and details of his illness in the Eastern papers.

His short visits to the patient proved very beneficial. Dick was in perfect health, and his individuality was inspiring. He and his sisters and cousins spent many merry hours together with their wheels, and the few holidays passed all too rapidly for the young people.

On Dick's last evening his Aunt Dolores gave a reception in his honor. Dr. Barclay, having seen his wife and children mingling with the pleasant groups, concluded to spend a few hours with Whitney. The Mowbrays owned a spacious house in the outskirts of the city. The surroundings were very attractive, and several times Dr. Barclay looked back at the scene of the festivities and recalled the lighted rooms, the merrymakers, and particularly his wife's appearance. He had left her standing near Dick, helping to receive the guests, and her wonderful beauty, her brilliancy of coloring and the charm of her manner were, as usual, impressing all who met her. These agreeable reflections vanished. The doctor entered Mr. Whitney's quiet room, with its dim light and silent watcher, and sat down, as usual, near his patient. The invalid was awake, and turned his head to look at his physician.

Whitney smiled feebly.

"Evening dress, I see. Are you going to a dinner?"

"No, I have just left a reception. Dick is a popular boy. He couldn't escape a dance this evening. Tomorrow he returns to New Haven. He was in to say good-bye not long ago, but you were asleep."

"He has a fine future before him. He has a good disposition."

"Very. He is amiable, and his perceptions are fine. He takes after his mother."

"You made a fortunate choice in marriage." Mr. Whitney spoke very slowly, as if weighing his words.

Dr. Barclay answered thoughtfully: "Well, I married a womanly woman. She understands the many interesting questions of the day, and yet is perfectly happy in performing her special duties to me and her children. Her mind is clear, her ethical sense is perfect. She believes in the suffrage for women; she thinks women should dress for safety when they ride bicycles."

Mr. Whitney looked amused.

"You have a number of little ones?"

"They are fast growers. My oldest girl is nearly as tall as her mother. We realize the passing years when we look at the children. Yet they keep us young. We are just as much interested in the baby's tastes as he himself is. We shrink to his size."

Mr. Whitney smiled, sighed and grew thoughtful.

"There is a matter that I want to consult you about. It is a long story. I try to forget it, but it worries me. Sometimes I think that if it were off my mind I should feel much better."

Dr. Barclay signed to the nurse, who left the room, and he spoke gently:

"You are not to grow excited, remember. If it is unimportant, I should prefer you to postpone it until you are decidedly stronger."

"It is about my will. I made it just before I left New York. I fear that, should I die, my relatives will manage to have it set aside. If I could explain why I made it, to you, for instance, your testimony would go to prove that I was of sound mind when I dictated it. If I recover I intend to seek the legatee, but should I die I want you to undertake the search, and see that my will reaches her. You will find it in a sealed package in my trunk. It is a long time after date to attempt anything in the way of reparation. Have you ever felt remorse? It is only latterly that my conscience has troubled me—only since I lost my boy. I had no plans that he was not to share with me. I never believed in the old legends and worn-out traditions that some

people accept as guides to conduct. What are you?—a Christian?"

"I profess to be one," Dr. Barclay said, gently.

"Well, I am a freethinker."

"You were about to explain some facts in connection with your will. I wish you would try to compose yourself, however. To-morrow—"

"But to-night I feel like telling you the reason why I made it. Only a short time ago I saw a picture. I am sure that she stood for it—" Whitney grew abstracted.

"Yes—I am paying attention."

"I think she is an actress. She may be in poor circumstances. She may find use for the money."

"You have left her everything?"

"Yes—everything."

Mr. Whitney's exhausted voice and the difficulty with which he concentrated his thoughts worried Dr. Barclay, and he quickly gave the invalid a stimulant, and again tried to induce him to seek repose and sleep.

His efforts were futile. The patient struggled against his weakness, his eyes brightened, his voice cleared, he insisted on talking. "I wish I could get away from memory!"

"Think of pleasant scenes. Recall youthful days."

"Oh—this happened years ago. I was engaged to the woman whom I married when I met this girl. There was only one way to possess her—I had to profess honorable motives. She accepted me. She proved an easy victim. She knew nothing of evil—nothing of the world. I never heard what became of her. I think she must have lost all trace of me, because when I inherited my uncle's wealth I took his name. Strange what things we are proud of in youth! To win a woman's heart and steal her honor! I wonder if—if there is a law of retribution?"

Dr. Barclay glanced at the sick man, conquered the impulse to speak, and let his head drop in his hands.

A curious sound startled him. He looked and saw on Whitney's features the change that comes but once. As Dr. Barclay rang for assistance, Dick

softly entered and at once comprehended the situation. At a quick sign from the doctor he put his arm under the dying man's head, and, thus supported, Whitney breathed his last.

"I thought I would risk finding him awake," Dick whispered, gazing down on his burden. "I was too late."

"Did you leave your mother at home?"

"Yes, and the girls."

"Well, my boy, there was no hope from the first for this poor man. We could only make him comfortable."

The nurses coming in, Dr. Barclay turned to Dick. "I want to find a package that is in Mr. Whitney's trunk. Let me see; I'll have a witness. Run down stairs and find one of the doctors."

"Shall I wait for you?"

"No, because I may be detained. Get home, and you might as well tell your mother. She is prepared for the news at any moment."

XVII

It was not until after dinner on the day following Mr. Whitney's death that Dr. Barclay found leisure to open the package that had been committed to his care.

Dick had left for the East by a morning train, Mel and Kate were entertaining some young friends in the room across the hall from the library, and he could hear little Bache on the upper floor, declaiming certain important personal experiences to his attentive mother. He shut out the merry sounds of voices, and sat down near the table feeling a certain reluctance about touching Mr. Whitney's papers, and yet perfectly conscious that the matter had to be settled without delay.

The will was in an envelope, with the contents indicated on the back; another sealed envelope contained what felt like a picture, and on it was written, in Mr. Whitney's clear script, "Portrait that resembles the legatee."

Dr. Barclay hesitated as to his right to open the envelope that held the

photograph, so he proceeded to look over the will. This was simply expressed and very concise, and having finished one page, he turned it back, when, suddenly, the name *Melusina Mowbray* met his dazzled eyes, and, for a moment, he sat as if stunned. With a supreme effort he rose and locked the door opening upon the hall. He slowly passed through to the dining-room, drank some brandy, and after a while found his nerves under control.

Then he took up the will and steadily read it from beginning to end. Next he opened the second envelope and drew out the picture that young Whitney had taken and valued so highly—Melusina, standing near the cedar.

Dr. Barclay leaned back in his great chair and tried to think. What was he to do? Melusina the mistress of millions! There could be no doubt of the validity of the will. He thought of Dick. He recalled the handsome young fellow in his evening dress, his arms holding the dying man.

While vivid scenes flashed upon his excited brain, his whole feeling was for his wife. What was right in this case? He felt too much anxiety to decide, and concluded to put off the consideration of the question until he had overcome his own nervousness. He would sleep upon it—his old plan.

He locked the papers in his desk, put on his hat and left the house. For hours he slowly walked and thought. One idea was uppermost, to burn the will and conceal Whitney's identity. But it was possible that the obituary notices would give the fact that he had changed his name, and Rupert kept his sister supplied with the exchanges. Finally, Dr. Barclay reached his own door, and his wife heard his steps and met him.

"I was just growing anxious, dear; you have been away so long!" She preceded him into the library, turned and put her arm around his neck. "Is anything wrong?"

"I hope not." He met her beautiful, straight glance and drew her close to him. "Melusina, we have no

secrets—we can be frank with each other. There is something that you must know. I thought I would sleep on it."

"Ah, but you couldn't! Richard, has anything happened to Dick?"

She shook from head to foot.

"My darling, no. After all, I believe that you are a braver woman than I am a man. You know, dear, that on one subject we are pledged to secrecy. Well, you may read in the papers some news that will surprise you, and so I am going to prepare you for it beforehand."

"So long as it doesn't concern those whom I love——"

"No, it doesn't—and yet, Melusina, it would not do for you to exhibit emotion on the subject. Sit down. I want to show you how I received my information. However, it is not painful."

He drew forward his deep chair, and she sat down, watching him with a half-smile on her features. "It is simply very unexpected. Years ago, Melusina, we were talking about the man who treated you so dishonorably. We questioned whether his conscience ever troubled him. It did trouble him latterly, and so he took a very characteristic method to still it. He was left alone in the world, and for that reason he made a will bequeathing you his entire fortune."

Melusina was gazing at Richard, her mind intent on his words. She spoke calmly:

"He is dead?"

"Yes."

She put her hand to her heart and then suddenly covered her face. Her husband drew her head to his shoulder and withdrew her hands. Her cheeks were burning, her eyes shone.

"Richard! I am very wicked! This news is a perfect relief! My darling is safe now."

"Yes, pet, and you are, too."

"But how—how can you know it—you—you who have been so honorable, so true?"

"It is providential. This will was entrusted to me to give to the legatee. No one has seen it but myself. I think your name even was written in

by the man who had it drawn up. How do you feel?"

She clung to him passionately.

"Happier than I ever felt in my life!"

"I understand—you feared meeting him."

"I dreaded it—not for my own sake, but for yours, for Dick's. But indeed, I never wished him evil. It was not for me to do that."

"You are incapable of hurting others, even in thought. This man was of easy morality. I fancy he forgot all about you until the sight of your picture recalled you to his mind."

"My picture?"

"When you see it, and when I tell you that, years ago, he inherited great wealth and changed his name, you will quickly realize how fortunate we have been, how our happiness has been watched over and secured."

Richard put the picture and the will before Melusina. She examined them in silence, but her glances were eloquent.

"Dick told me that——"

"Yes; he held Whitney at the last——"

"How wonderful!"

"Could anything be more tragic? Ah, Melusina, when my time comes,

I want Dick to believe that he holds his father's hand in his."

"Dear boy, it would break his heart to think otherwise."

"And mine, if he should hear the truth."

"Richard, how you have loved him!"

"Yes—first for your sweet sake, then for his own. He is a noble lad."

"He wishes for this picture, and so I will keep it for him."

"Oh, yes, it is easily accounted for. Now, I have fulfilled my promise, I have found the legatee and given her the will. You can do as you please with it. Whitney surmised that you were on the stage and perhaps none too well provided for. The picture is a little theatrical, I must admit."

Richard held it under the lamp and was still examining its details when Melusina took a match from the shelf, struck it, and put the will near the flame. Then she placed the blazing paper in the grate and stood watching it until it was reduced to ashes. She felt Richard's arms about her and lifted her face to his in silence.

"It may take a lifetime, my darling, but you see how sorrow may be averted and evil overcome."



DISCHARGING A DUTY

MISS WRINKLES—I wonder why Jack kissed my hand?

MISS SWEETTHING—I suppose he thought it was up to him to kiss something.



WISE MAN

JONES—Do you ever fail to take your wife's part?

BROWN—Never. I always like to be on the winning side.

THE WITCH

By Theodore Strong

WITCH of Summer Woods and Sea,
Come! a poison mix for me.

Lend thy magic to my mood,
And a soul's death shall be brewed.

In thy ready cauldron stir
All my memories of Her.

Stir the marvel of her face
And the sorcery of her grace—

Add the passion of her eyes
And the meaning of her sighs—

Lure of moonlight—bloom of boughs—
Touch of lips and plighted vows—

Days and dreams on soft, swift wings—
Silences and whisperings—

Add a thousand hopes, and add
All the faith in her I had.

Wherefore, Witch, thy arm is strong,
Add the first deceit and wrong—

Add the falsehood and the smile
That disguised the wanton guile—

Add the long hypocrisy
And a fool's blind loyalty—

So! the chemistry of Fate
Thus our draught will formulate.

Stir, O Witch, above the flame
Of a curse I dare not name.

The residuum of all
Is blent aconite and gall.

THE SMART SET

Fill the phial and let me drink,
 Damned of soul and doomed to *think*.

Stay! thy hand is very fair;
 Let it linger in my hair.

Witch, I find thy face as sweet
 As the field-flowers at thy feet.

What seductive languor lies
 In the laughter of thine eyes!

Oh, thy hair's the sun at noon;
 Thy white body is the moon.

Giv'st thy mouth to mine to kiss?—
 Witch, what sorcery is this?

Dryad, thou art witch in truth!
 Thou hast charmed back all my youth!

Lo, the dregs of memory
 Forth I cast into the sea!

All the past's a fallen star!
 Thou art Love's own avatar!

Let thine arms about me twine;
 Press thy red mouth close to mine.

This my potion—thy caress,
 Philtre of forgetfulness!



ONE MARKED TRAIT

MRS. SWELLTON—Have you been married long enough to find out what your husband's tastes are?

MRS. VAN HOPER—Oh, yes. I have discovered that he has a remarkable fondness for pretty women.



THE IDEA!

THE HUSBAND—You don't mean to say, my dear, that you are actually going to the golf links again?

THE WIFE (*with high scorn*)—What do you expect me to do, stay home and take care of the children?

THE WORTHINGTON ROBBERY

By Mabel Cronise Jones

ROBERT AINSLIE was re-reading for the third time a letter that had come in the afternoon's mail. Evidently its contents disturbed him greatly. It was from an old-time friend, a friend who had always held a warm place in his heart, and who now seemed to be in grievous trouble. It was not so much what the letter said as what it hinted that perplexed the reader. Ainslie glanced over it once more, with a perturbed expression.

MY DEAR AINSLIE:

I claim your promised visit *now*. I want to see you at once—in fact, I need you. The country is gorgeous in its green raiment, but I freely acknowledge that my motive in writing so urgently is a purely selfish one. Come, and bring along all of your analytical and critical faculties. You must do some detective work for me. You will wonder why I do not send for a detective. It is absolutely impossible for me to do such a thing. I think that I would sooner die than tell a stranger the story that I should be obliged to tell if I engaged his services in this matter.

Yet I cannot let the affair rest; it will wreck my happiness and poison my entire life if I do. There is a bare possibility that I may be mistaken in my conclusions; on that chance rest all my hopes. For this reason I am sending for you. For the sake of our old friendship, drop everything and come here by the first train.

It will not be easy to tell even you the tale that you must hear before you can understand my situation. At college we used to declare that you were cut out for a detective. I still think so; and surely you will not refuse to use your gifts in behalf of an old friend who appeals to you from the very depths of despair.

Come as soon as you can possibly, but come as a casual visitor. Make

no allusion to *anyone* of a deeper motive for your visit than appears on the surface.

Your friend always,

HOWARD A. WORTHINGTON.

Ainslie was a man of prompt action. Within a few hours he had arranged with his law partner for an absence of indefinite length, had wired Worthington to expect him that night by the late train, and with valise all packed was standing on the railway platform.

Worthington's letter puzzled him more and more. Only some weighty reason could have caused his friend to write it. He had attended Worthington's marriage in the Fall. New York society had been decidedly shocked at the match, for, while Worthington was the last representative of an old and wealthy family, the bride was a poor school teacher with no aristocratic relatives—with nothing, in short, to commend her to the exclusive set, unless it were a face strikingly unique in its beauty.

Ainslie had taken rather a fancy to the girl. She had borne herself with such ease and hauteur that the bridegroom's friends had been foiled in their attempts to patronize her. She had held her own unflinchingly, and had compelled the respect of her husband's circle of acquaintances.

While Ainslie admired her, he had never felt quite sure that he understood her. He could not determine whether love or ambition had prompted her marriage to Worthington. Certainly, Howard possessed all of the personal qualifications that generally render a man attractive in the eyes of women, but, while Margaret treated him with courteous deference, Ainslie

could never detect any spontaneous affection in her manner.

A month before, the Worthingtons had closed their Fifth avenue home and had gone to Howard's country residence up the Hudson. Margaret had urged their early departure from the city. Ainslie, who had seen considerable of them during the Winter, decided that Margaret was tired of the social warfare into which she had been plunged.

She had gained some notable triumphs and could afford to smile at those who had snubbed her at the time of her marriage, yet, though her social career had been brilliant, Ainslie felt that she cared but little for the life.

He had no clue by which to guess Worthington's trouble, and though he dimly felt that it must in some way relate to the young wife, he could form no idea as to its nature.

He reached his destination shortly before midnight and found Worthington restlessly awaiting him.

"This is more than kind of you, Robert," he said, taking Ainslie's hand in a close clasp; "I shall never forget it."

"Disburden your mind at once, then, Howard, as we drive to your house, and let me know what sort of a task is before me."

Worthington groaned. "I don't see how I can tell you, after all; yet I must, and I met you to-night for that special purpose. We cannot be overheard in the carriage, and I suppose I can talk better in the dark than I could under a brilliant light. Come ahead—here is my trap; I drove down alone."

Ainslie took his place with a cheery remark, but Worthington failed to respond, and the horse had borne them some distance from the station before he broached the subject uppermost in his mind. Then he plunged at once *in medias res*, as if determined to get through with the affair as soon as possible.

"I was robbed of a lot of family jewelry, together with five hundred dollars in money, just five days ago,"

he said, abruptly. "No one knows of it except the guilty person and myself, so be sure that you make no allusion to the matter. You are not supposed to know anything of it. I seldom keep any amount of money in the house, paying all my bills by cheque; but this money was paid me by some tenants too late in the afternoon to allow me to bank it. I have a private den up at the house, you know, so I put the money in a small safe that stands in the room, and thought no more of it."

He stopped, the rest of the story being evidently harder to tell. Ainslie broke in with a view to help him:

"You say this happened five days ago, Howard? That fact places me at a great disadvantage. I ought to have been on the spot at once. What changes have there been in your household since that time?"

"Not any. We have half a dozen servants, that we brought with us from the city. They have all been with us for some little time, and I imagine they are entirely trustworthy. Aside from these servants, who were all in the house on the night that the robbery occurred, there was no one present except my cousin, Roderick Huntingdon; Miss Mayhew, a friend of my wife, and Margaret and myself. These persons are all there now, and I have purposely refrained from inviting other guests in order that you might find things in exactly the same condition as they were five days ago. Both Roderick and Jean Mayhew expected to leave before this, but I prevailed on them to stay—though you might be able to work better in their absence."

"No," Ainslie said, emphatically, "I must have as nearly as possible the original setting of the affair. I fear you have lost valuable time, Howard. Now tell me how and when you discovered your loss, and why it is that the matter touches you so deeply."

Worthington did not reply at once; then he said, slowly: "I wish that I *could* have made up my mind to send

for you before. But I could not. I'm not getting on very fast, I fear, with my story. I put the money in the safe of which I spoke——"

"Who knew of your doing so?" Ainslie interjected.

"The whole household, I presume," Worthington returned, grimly. "Roderick had gone to the city with me that day and had chanced to be present when I received the bulk of the rents. He thoughtlessly made some remark about it at the dinner-table that evening, which led me to explain that I must keep it in the house overnight. I replied hastily, before I remembered that the servants were present. You can see that everyone had a chance to know about it."

"What kind of a safe have you?"

"A small one, but a very strong one. It is fastened securely to the wall of my study, and stands in a recess that is curtained off. It has a strong and peculiar lock—not a combination lock, however. I have a key to it—here it is," and Worthington pulled an antique-looking key from his pocket. Ainslie examined it as best he could by the dim light of the vehicle.

"I suppose that no one else has a key?"

"Yes," Worthington replied, with palpable hesitation. "I had one made for my wife. Several times I needed to send in haste for papers that I keep there, and for convenience sake I had an extra key made for her a week ago."

"Just a moment, Howard. Who knew of your doing so? Any of the servants?"

"I can't tell you that. I handed it to her one day at dinner—of course, Miss Mayhew and Roderick were present; whether any of the servants were in the room or not I am unable to say. I know that several jests were made on the subject at the time. Then the whole thing dropped. On the afternoon of the robbery I put the money into the safe. The day was stormy and disagreeable, I remember. After dinner I prevailed on Margaret to go to her room and stay there for

the evening, as she had one of her rare headaches.

"Roderick and Miss Mayhew went off to the music-room to practice some duets that my cousin had gotten that day. I went to my study, did a little writing, then, feeling drowsy, threw myself on a lounge in the room and soon fell asleep. I woke with the feeling that someone was near me. The room was dark. I started up to light the lamp, but before I had struck a match I heard my wife's voice in the hall. Roderick had evidently met her just outside my door, and he made some remark of astonishment at seeing her. She laughed lightly and said that she was going directly to her room, and that Roderick should not tell me that she had disobeyed my instructions. I hurried to the hall, but by the time I reached there Margaret had vanished. I followed to her room and found her lying on a couch. I laughingly chided her for breaking her promise and leaving her room. She looked up in apparent astonishment, and insisted that she had not been outside her door.

"'But, dear,' I said, rather perplexed, 'I heard you talking to Roderick just now in the hall.' She denied that she had done anything of the kind or that she had left the room since entering it after dinner."

"Is she a somnambulist?" Ainslie asked.

"No," Worthington replied, emphatically; "she certainly is not. Furthermore, the voice that I heard in the hall was not the voice of a person asleep. My wife acknowledged, too, that she had been wide awake ever since leaving the dining-room. I stayed with her a little while, more puzzled and disturbed than I wished to own. As I went back to the study I met Roderick in the hall. He stopped me with a smile. 'I am telling tales out of school, Howard,' he said, 'but your wife is promenading these halls and looking like a ghost, when she ought to be abed. I just met her.' I thanked him and went on. I don't know what impulse

seized me then, but I went straight to the study and unlocked my safe. The money was gone—not a vestige or sign left of it; not only the money, but a case containing all the family diamonds. I had brought them down from the city several days before, as there were to be two or three social affairs in the neighborhood, at which I wanted Margaret to wear them. They were worth a fortune, aside from their invaluable associations. They were gone. Now, Robert, you have the full story, and you can never guess what the telling of it has been to me."

"I fail to see why you take this matter so much to heart, old fellow. Your key was safe, but probably Mrs. Worthington had lost hers, and some servant entered the study and robbed you while you lay asleep."

"No." Worthington shook his head despondently. "Some such explanation occurred to me, so I went direct to my wife's room and looked in her jewel case, where she has kept the key since I gave it to her. It was there."

"Then," Ainslie responded, "her maid could easily have removed it, robbed the safe and replaced the key again."

"Prove that, for heaven's sake, Robert, and I will bless you all my life. But if that is the case, why was Margaret so anxious to conceal her absence from the room and to have me think that she had been there ever since dinner? There is one thing more that I presume I should tell you, since I have resolved to be perfectly frank. Of course, I settled a liberal sum on Margaret at the time we were married. The income is hers to do with as she chooses, but the efforts she has made to hold her own in society must have used it all up. She has dressed magnificently, as you know, and I have been tremendously proud of her and of her success. It costs something, though, and several times I have tried to increase her allowance, but she wouldn't permit me. Margaret is horribly proud, in her way, and I know that she hates to

have the question of money come up between us."

"I don't see the drift of all this," Ainslie remarked, as his companion paused.

"I am trying to show you that her income was all used up by the social demands upon it. It chanced that that very afternoon I had happened to go to her writing desk. I saw a letter from her mother lying there, and read it. Margaret had just received the letter that day. I must explain that our letters are usually common property, and that I was guilty of no impropriety in reading it. The letter was in the same tenor as usual, containing the home gossip, in which my wife naturally would be interested. At the close there was an allusion to a mortgage of one thousand dollars on the home, which must be met within a month. How it would be met, Mrs. Shelton said she could not see, as her husband's illness had consumed all of their little savings. Then she seemed to regret having said anything, and told Margaret not to worry, as they would doubtless manage some way. A letter that my wife had commenced in reply was lying on the desk, and I could not resist reading the opening lines, especially as she usually handed me her letters to read before mailing them. Margaret wrote affectionately, telling her mother not to be troubled about the money, for, though she did not have the amount on hand just then, she would get it within a few days. The letter broke off abruptly there. Evidently, Mrs. Worthington had been interrupted."

Ainslie turned to look at his companion as well as he might in the darkness.

"Of course, you went to your wife and offered her the money, delicately enough so that she could not refuse. What seems strange to me, Howard, knowing your generosity, is that you did not at first make ample provision for your wife's family."

"I did not mention the subject at all to Margaret," Worthington replied, awkwardly. "I was hurt that

she had not come to me at once with the letter. Some way the confounded question of dollars and cents has always seemed a barrier between us. I saw her before dinner, but she did not mention the subject, and I felt too hurt to force her confidence. It seemed as if her love for me could not have been very deep, or she would not have hesitated to ask for what she knew would be freely given. It looks strange that her family should be in such straits, I know, but I have refrained from offering them pecuniary aid through fear of hurting Margaret's feelings."

"I don't understand such subtleties," Ainslie returned, bluntly; "let us talk common sense. What did she say when you told her of the robbery?"

Worthington smothered an angry ejaculation. "Heavens! you don't suppose I could discuss that subject with her, do you? Everything proves that she took the bills and diamonds. Her need of money, her acknowledgment to her mother that she had none, but would get some, her falsehood about leaving her room—*everything* shows that she is guilty. I did not tell her, or anyone, of my loss."

"And you have been the same to her as usual in these last five days?"

"I have tried to be; I hardly suppose I have succeeded very well."

"If you are so convinced of her guilt, Howard, why did you send for me?" Ainslie inquired, dryly.

"Because I must have proof, positive proof, one way or the other."

"And then?"

"Then, if she is guilty—as I suppose she is—we will not keep up the farce of married life any longer. If you can possibly prove her innocent—"

"Yes?"

"I shall want to do as Judas did—go out and hang myself for all these cursed suspicions."

"Well," Ainslie said, slowly, "it will be singular if I cannot get proof of some kind inside of a week. I have some theories already, but you

needn't ask me any questions, for I shall not answer them. Of course, your wife may be innocent of the robbery, but if she is—well, we must wait and see what time will develop."

Ainslie was cordially welcomed next morning by his hostess and her two guests, and he sat down to the cheery breakfast table feeling suddenly as if the fine theories that he had spent the night weaving together were too impossible to bear the light of day. He tried to throw off the matter from his mind and to appear as usual.

"Did Worthington tell you that I had found myself suddenly played out and had resolved to quarter myself here for a while?" he asked, with a genial laugh.

"He told us last evening that he had received a despatch from you, Mr. Ainslie, and we were most delighted to hear that you were coming," the hostess said, graciously.

Ainslie looked at her critically. She was certainly more worn and pale than when she had left the city. The rest of country life had evidently not produced the beneficial results that one might naturally expect. She looked to Ainslie like an unhappy woman—a woman with a burden on her mind.

He bowed his thanks to her speech, and replied, half-ruefully: "I fear I am spoiling a delightful quartette; four is a much more manageable number than five."

Miss Mayhew glanced up with a surprised arching of her brows.

"Surely Mr. Ainslie does not imagine that he can be superfluous?" she said, with marked suavity in her tones.

Ainslie looked annoyed. He had met Jean Mayhew constantly in society for several years, and the girl generally treated him to little sarcastic remarks on every occasion. He did not pretend to understand it. Margaret rushed to his rescue.

"Jean, I fear your slumbers were not good last night. I have noticed that there is a direct relation between

your night's rest and the condition of your temper. I trust that Mr. Ainslie is down here as my special attendant. When my husband goes to the city I am stranded, Mr. Ainslie," she added, turning to him; "Roderick and Jean go off on long pedestrian tours, which I am too indolent to join. Your coming is a veritable boon to me."

"Besides," Huntingdon said, courtously, "you will be needed, Ainslie, to fill up the quartette again. I must be off to Europe soon. In fact, I should have gone some little time ago if Robert had not so strongly objected."

"Business or pleasure?" said Ainslie, interrogatively.

"A little of both; but more, probably, of the latter element," Huntingdon said, pleasantly. Then the talk drifted to impersonal things, and Ainslie occupied himself with an analytical examination of each person, including the butler who was waiting upon them with a vast amount of condescension in his manner.

After breakfast Ainslie contrived to find himself alone with Worthington.

"Well?" said his host, with an anxious look.

"Don't begin to ask questions, Howard. I haven't taken a fair survey of the ground yet. I want to know if you have a powerful magnifying glass in the house?"

"No."

"You are going up to the city?"

"Yes, for a few hours."

"Then bring me down a glass—a good one, remember. You needn't show it to anyone, either."

With that Ainslie walked off and went in quest of his hostess. For the next few days he was her inseparable companion, trying, with all the *finesse* at his command, to win her confidence. Evidently he succeeded to a certain extent, for on the morning of the fifth day she turned to him abruptly as they were walking through the woods.

"Mr. Ainslie, I believe you are my friend. Am I right?"

"Indeed you are," he said, seriously, wondering to what this was the prelude.

"I am going to ask a strange thing of you," she said, slowly. "I shall not ask for your promise not to betray me, for you are a gentleman. Even if you see fit to deny my request, I know that you will not mention this matter."

"If I can serve you I shall do so, of course; you must know that," he returned, earnestly. He carefully refrained, however, from giving any pledge of secrecy. His loyalty belonged, first, to Worthington. Whatever the wife said he must tell the husband. There was no time to waste over quibbles of honor. Too much was at stake. If Margaret were innocent, she would eventually thank him; if guilty, she deserved any fate for deceiving so noble and true-hearted a husband as Howard Worthington.

It was perfectly clear that she found it hard to frame her request. At last she said, in a low tone:

"Mr. Ainslie, I need a thousand dollars. I am out of funds now. When we were married, Mr. Worthington arranged for a certain sum to be placed in trust for me. I receive the interest semi-annually. This is merely, you know, for my own personal expenses, and the amount is certainly liberal. I should not be so poverty-stricken at this moment if it were not that I was shamefully extravagant last Winter. I expect, however," she added, with a bitter laugh, "that under the same provocation I should act again in precisely the same manner. You do not know how it hurts me to be patronized."

"I know that you are a trump," he averred, with genuine admiration. "I never was so delighted at anything as at your success last Winter. You want a thousand dollars; fortunately, I have my cheque-book in my pocket. I wish all of *my* wishes were so easily gratified," he said, with a little sigh, as he drew forth the book and a fountain pen. Putting his foot on a low

stump and resting the book on his knee, he wrote out the cheque and handed it to Mrs. Worthington with an agreeable smile, that really hid no little perplexity.

"I thank you from my heart," she said, in a low tone, and, looking curiously at her, he saw that her beautiful eyes had filled with tears. "My interest will be due in two months, now, and I will return this then. I can never, never tell you how grateful I am."

"Mrs. Worthington," the young man said, swayed by a sudden impulse, "will you forgive me a question? Your husband is the soul of generosity; why not ask him for this money? You know that you are perfectly welcome to that, or to many times that amount, from me, but I fear that you are misjudging Howard, thinking him ungenerous when he is not."

"I could not, *could not* ask him," she said, quickly. "I will try to explain how I feel to you, but I fear that only a woman can understand me. When we were married no thought of money entered my mind at first. I had given Howard all my love; everything else was trivial. Since I could give him myself, we were equal; what he could bestow on me of wealth I could freely accept, since there could be no question between us of giving or taking. That at first was my thought; but almost immediately I saw that his money was going to raise an intangible barrier between us, as it has. Instead of treating the matter lightly, as of no account, he took such elaborate precautions not to hurt my pride—that it *was* hurt. He used so much tact and *finesse* about an affair of no moment that it gave his wealth an undue importance in our relations. I can hardly make myself clear to you, I fear," she said, wistfully. "Of course, the question of money had to come up often, and whenever it did Howard considered it his duty to treat it with such elaborate delicacy that I felt wounded. He had understood me very little, and I begin to fear that I, too, have totally misunderstood him.

Things have grown worse and worse in this particular between us, until I could almost find it in my heart to wish that Howard had not a dollar in the world. With regard to this sum," she added, holding up the check that Ainslie had just given her, "there are very special reasons why I could not mention the matter to my husband. I would rather beg for it on the streets, badly as I need it."

Ainslie sought his friend that afternoon, in more perplexity than he cared to own, and faithfully repeated to him all that had passed between Mrs. Worthington and himself.

"As regards the money question, Howard," he concluded, with blunt frankness, "you have been a fool; you should have trusted your wife's love, and not been so intolerably afraid of hurting her pride. I can understand perfectly how your very evident fear of wounding her would be sure to do so. Don't you see? It wasn't accepting and enjoying your wealth that hurt her, but your view of the whole matter. You were an ass."

"Yes, I was, and it has led to all this misery. I could beg her pardon in the very dust for my absurdity,—but," he concluded, bitterly, "the fact that I was an idiot need not have made her a—" He stopped. He could not call his wife a "thief," despite all of his anger toward her.

"You still think her guilty, do you?" Ainslie questioned, curiously.

"I must."

"Why, then, did she apply to me to-day for money?"

"Because she did not have enough ready cash herself. There was only five hundred dollars in the roll of notes taken, and she has evidently realized that it is not as easy a matter to dispose of stolen jewels as she had thought."

"The jewels were her own, weren't they?" Ainslie questioned, dryly. "Could she steal from herself? If your idea be true, why didn't she borrow five hundred from me instead of a thousand? Another five hundred—provided she already had a like sum in her possession—would have been

sufficient to make up the mortgage money."

"Don't ask me to explain her actions," Worthington said, wearily; "perhaps she wished enough to send the interest due, as well as the principal; perhaps she thought it well to keep a reserve on hand hereafter. As for the jewels—they were hers, of course, yet they were family jewels, and she must have known perfectly well that I would never allow them to be sold. What could be her special objection to appealing to me just now, if she were innocent? You said that she seemed particularly averse to asking me for money for this purpose."

"As you just said, Howard, 'don't ask me to explain her actions.' I am not certain yet which one of us is the fool in this case, but really, I hardly think it is yours truly."

"Have you anything to go on?" Worthington asked, breathlessly. "For heaven's sake, man, remember how much this means to me! You promised me some definite information within a week."

"The week isn't up yet," was the laconic answer. "As for clues, perhaps I have some, and perhaps I haven't. I'll tell you later on. I think that I shall let your cousin look after both the ladies to-morrow and go into the city with you. I need a little apparatus."

"Roderick will not be here to-morrow," Worthington replied. "He just told me definitely that he must engage passage on Saturday's steamer. He is going up to-morrow to make some necessary arrangements. I suppose he will spend to-morrow night and Friday with us, but he is determined to leave on Saturday. I'm sorry. We shall miss him."

"Yes, we shall," Ainslie agreed, with some emphasis. "I'll modify my plans a little, but I must run up for a couple of hours, anyway. By the way, Howard, bring home with you to-morrow night a good-sized roll of bills—better make it a thousand dollars. Don't show the bills to anyone, and don't mention the subject. If I

chance to allude to it carelessly, hush me up, as if you were irritated at my thoughtlessness in making the matter known. See?"

"No; of course I don't see, but I'll follow your instructions, anyway. Did you make any use of that microscope?"

"Rather!" Ainslie returned, with a gentle smile. "It is certainly a valuable companion."

"Robert," Worthington broke out, suddenly, "won't you tell me what is in your mind? Do you believe there is a shadow of possibility that my wife did not take that money?"

"Now, see here," Ainslie exclaimed, energetically, "you don't care a picayune for my ideas, and you know it. What you want is downright proof, one way or the other; and proof is what I mean to give you before you are many days older. Come ahead to dinner now, and don't, under any circumstances, forget that money to-morrow."

Some way the evening dragged. Mrs. Worthington was plainly unequal to her duties as a hostess. Ainslie declined to throw himself, as usual, into the breach, and as a result the little company broke up at a very early hour. Huntingdon and Ainslie walked off to the smoking-room together, and their host saw no more of either of them until the next morning. Then Ainslie met him in the breakfast-room, where they chanced to be the first to appear.

"What were you up to last night, Robert?" Worthington asked, half-angrily. "This is a very queer story that I hear about you!"

Ainslie smiled blandly. "What did you hear, old fellow?"

"I just met Roderick in the yard, and he looked so blue that I inquired what the trouble was. He tried to laugh it off, but finally owned up that he had lost a large sum of money to you at poker last night, and that he felt rather chagrined and poverty stricken in consequence. I didn't know that you went in for that sort of thing, Rob."

"You're not up on all my accom-

plishments. You must allow me a little recreation if I am to be rusticated down here for an indefinite period. Ah, Miss Mayhew, good morning; have you any commissions for me in the city to-day?"

"Are you going to desert us, too?" Mrs. Worthington cried, in mock despair, as she entered with Huntingdon, just in time to catch Ainslie's remark. "Roderick and my husband declare that they have important business on hand, so that Jean and I shall be thrown entirely upon our own resources."

"I shall be gone only a couple of hours," Ainslie asserted. "I would not go at all, but, unfortunately, I have a law partner who insists on seeing me to-day, and I presume he must be humored. Can I do anything for either of you ladies?"

"Well," Miss Mayhew said, slowly, "as Margaret seems disinclined to speak, I might give you a trifling commission, since you so kindly offer. I should like about a dozen of the latest novels, and some papers and magazines, five pounds of chocolate bonbons, some roses, and—"

"Have pity, Jean!" Worthington cried, amid the general laughter. "I want to see Ainslie back to-day, but if you go on with your list he will never venture to appear again."

"Don't be afraid, Miss Mayhew," Ainslie said, calmly, "I am braver than Howard imagines. I shall be back this afternoon, and you will find all of your commissions faithfully fulfilled."

"You have not written them down," she suggested, maliciously.

"What need," he asked, "when you know that your words are engraved on my heart?" and Ainslie had the profound satisfaction of seeing the stately young lady blush, despite the laugh with which she turned off his words.

However, a surprise was in store for Jean Mayhew. The morning had passed rather wearily in the absence of the men, despite the warm friendship that really existed between her and Margaret. After luncheon Mar-

garet had gone to her room, and Jean, with a book, had settled herself under the trees. She was thinking rather than reading. That Margaret was unhappy she knew, and she wondered if she had guessed the reason. Of course, it must spring from Worthington's changed manner, for Jean Mayhew's keen eyes could not fail to discern the absence of the old *bonhomie* and cordial affection. His ostentatious politeness could not cover the lack.

While she was still musing on this theme a shadow fell across her book, and she glanced up, to see Ainslie beside her, his arms full of packages.

"Here are your novels, Miss Mayhew. I trust that you will approve of my selections. Here are the papers and magazines. This package holds the bonbons, I imagine, and—here are your roses! I hope I forgot nothing," he added, with a smile, dropping the last bundle into Jean's lap and placidly stretching himself out full length on the grass beside her.

For once Jean Mayhew was at a loss for words, and Robert Ainslie noted the circumstance with satisfaction.

"What were you thinking about as I came up?" he questioned, curiously.

"Of Margaret. She is not happy."

"No?"

"No, she is not, and you must be as well aware of the fact as I. I am afraid that some misunderstanding may have arisen between her husband and herself, Mr. Ainslie." Then, with defiant audacity: "Don't you suppose that you may be responsible for the trouble?"

"I?" asked Robert, in honest perplexity.

"Yes, you! It seems as if you were Margaret's confidant on all occasions, and—and—it isn't easy to say, but don't you think that Mr. Worthington may feel that you monopolize too much of his wife's society?"

Ainslie lay down on the grass and indulged in such a ringing laugh that his companion grew dignified and offended.

"I beg your pardon, Jean," he said, suddenly, raising a grave face to hers, and seeming utterly unconscious that he had made use of her Christian name, "it really is no laughing matter, though your surmise is so far from the truth that it struck me as extremely funny. There *is* a misunderstanding, but it has nothing to do with me. It arose before I came here. I have nothing to do with it except that I am trying to straighten matters out. I wonder," looking at her intently, "if you couldn't help me?"

"Oh, do let me!" she cried, eagerly.

He seemed to be weighing the subject. "I suppose I could manage without you, Jean, but I should really like to make assurance doubly sure. Can you stay awake all night, if necessary, and do as I tell you, without asking any questions?"

"Yes, I can—but am I not to know the meaning of it all, eventually?"

"If all goes well," he answered, "I shall consider myself at liberty to tell you the truth to-morrow, though you will have to hear it under a pledge of secrecy. Further than this I cannot promise. Is it a bargain?"

"Yes," eagerly. "Now tell me what I am to do."

"Very well. Worthington will be home on the five o'clock train. Before that time you are to go to Margaret and not to leave her for a single second, on any pretext, until I tell you that you may. You must be at her side every instant. Don't let Huntingdon distract your attention. If she leaves the room, go with her. Say that you are ill and nervous, and make her sleep with you to-night. Don't you go to sleep, however. Get up and read these novels. You will find enough here to keep you engaged until daylight. Jean, this is no light task, I know. If you undertake it, it must be faithfully performed. Are you sure you understand?"

"Yes, I think so. I am not to let Margaret out of my sight from five o'clock to-night until you absolve me from my mission."

"That is right. Will you do it?"

"Tell me first that you are not harboring any unjust and unkind thoughts about her."

"I am not," Ainslie returned, earnestly. "It is because I believe her to be as pure and good and true as you, *yourself*, that I beseech you to do this thing. I want you to do it for *her* sake. Will you?"

"Yes," Miss Mayhew answered, heartily, "I will. There is my hand on it. I will be a perfect martinet. Your instructions shall be carried out to the letter."

"Thank you," Ainslie replied, kissing her hand with bold audacity. "It is comforting to know that I have a coadjutor. Now I must leave you."

"Can't you stay?" she inquired, quickly. "It is pleasanter out here than in the house."

"Of course it is, since you are here, but I have some work that must be done at once. I wish I *could* stay," he added, regretfully.

"At least, let me thank you for these exquisite roses, and for all the rest of my treasures," she said, smilingly. "I'm afraid that I cannot repay you for all your trouble."

"I'll let you do that to-morrow," he returned, seriously. "Now, *au revoir*, and be sure that you do not fail me to-night."

Jean looked after him in profound perplexity. The mystery was too deep for her reading. Presently she gathered up her packages and went in search of Margaret. She would begin her task at once. As she passed the study she heard Ainslie softly whistling within, and wondered anew what important "work" had taken him into the house.

Margaret seemed grateful for her company, and her task therefore promised to be comparatively easy. At dinner-time Miss Mayhew devoted considerable covert attention to her host, and was surprised to find how little he contributed to the sparkling conversation which, as usual, enlivened the meal. Only once did Jean see him roused from monosyllabic replies.

The servants were removing the numerous side dishes and bringing in some luscious fruit, when Ainslie suddenly looked up.

"I say, Howard," he ejaculated, "did old Seton find you to-day? He had been out on a collecting tour and had an immense roll of bills—nearly a thousand dollars, I should think. It was too late to bank, and he wanted to turn it over to you."

Worthington frowned.

"He found me," he answered, shortly, and hurriedly commenced to relate a funny incident that had come under his notice that day.

"Did he make you take it, Howard? Did you have to bring it home with you?"

Worthington's frown deepened, and, as the servants just then passed from the room, he turned sharply on Ainslie.

"I had to bring it home, of course. Now let the matter drop, please. I don't care to have the servants too well informed on such subjects."

Naturally, the talk then ended, and the host again became taciturn. The evening was unusually gay and the hour, when the little group broke up, was quite late. Margaret yielded without difficulty to Jean's plea that Mrs. Worthington would share her room that night. Margaret seemed weary, and was soon sound asleep. Jean felt as if she never again would be able to sleep. She slipped from the bed and hurriedly dressed herself, taking her station by an open window. She was too excited and nervous to follow Ainslie's advice and read; besides, she dared not light a lamp for fear of waking Margaret. One hour dragged wearily after another. A clock somewhere had struck four. Jean was still at her post, every faculty on the alert, and Margaret was still sleeping peacefully, when a pistol shot rang through the house.

Jean sprang to her feet in uncontrollable terror and rushed into the hall. From the lower corridor voices floated up to her. She could plainly distinguish Ainslie's tones as well as Huntingdon's and Worthington's.

All three of the men seemed passionately angry, but none of them evidently was injured. Somewhat reassured, and mindful of her promise to Ainslie, she slipped back to her post, leaving the door of her room open. Margaret still slept.

For an hour the sound of voices floated up indistinctly; then she suddenly heard the noise of wheels in the yard, and a few moments later the three men emerged from the house and drove rapidly off. Jean would have been more than mortal if she had not been nearly consumed with curiosity. She grew too impatient to remain seated, and her restless movements around the room eventually woke Margaret.

Jean felt remorseful as she saw Margaret's eyes open wearily. "I beg your pardon ten thousand times, dearest, for disturbing you; but, since you *are* awake, won't you please get up and dress? I do so want to go out among the flowers."

Margaret faintly objected, but good-naturedly allowed herself to be overruled, and at six o'clock the two girls found themselves in the cool morning air. They had only taken a turn or two on the lawn when Jean heard wheels rapidly approaching, and a moment later Worthington and Ainslie drove into the yard.

"I call this luck!" Ainslie exclaimed, sincerely. "I was wanting to see you, Miss Mayhew, but I feared that it would be many weary hours before you regaled my eyes with your presence. Will you come for a stroll with me?"

"Shall I go, Margaret?" Jean asked, eagerly.

"Please do, Miss Mayhew, for I want to monopolize my wife's attention for a little while," interposed Worthington. "James, put up the horses and rub them down well. Now, dear, will you come into my study, please?"

There was a curiously humble and entreating note in Worthington's voice which Jean did not fail to notice, even as she turned away with Ainslie.

"I kept my promise, Mr. Ainslie,"

she said, brightly. "I did not close my eyes at all last night. Of course, I am perishing with curiosity, but do not tell your story unless it is right that you should do so."

"I think it is right, Jean. I would not tell anyone else, certainly, but I know that you will respect my confidence—and I have a special reason for wishing you to know all about my connection with this matter. Now, listen," and Ainslie graphically detailed to her astonished ears every circumstance connected with the robbery up to the time of his own interview with her the day before.

"Now, you can see, Jean, why I wanted your help. I believed from the first that Margaret was innocent, despite all of the incriminating circumstances against her. I wanted your help in case my plans should miscarry. If the money vanished again, and I did not catch the culprit red-handed, as I hoped to do, I still wanted your evidence to prove that Margaret did not have an opportunity to go unobserved to the study. Do you see?"

"I see that much; and, of course, Margaret never knew anything of the first robbery. Still, how *did* you explain to yourself her presence outside the study door, and then her denial of it, even after her husband had heard her voice?"

"Ventriloquism, Jean. I don't deserve any of the admiration which Worthington is inclined to bestow on me for this affair, for I got onto the clue in a flash, even as he was telling me the story. There was no use giving him my theories, so I went to work for proof. You see, I had known at college that Huntingdon was a sneak and coward, and a man isn't apt to change his moral nature very much after he leaves college. Then, half a dozen years ago I chanced to attend an amateur entertainment at which Huntingdon took the part of a ventriloquist and performed all manner of clever tricks.

"It was sheer good luck that made me remember that incident as Worthington drove me up here that first

night. I had never liked Huntingdon and I did like Margaret. I suppose that was the real explanation."

"But how did you prove his guilt?" Jean asked, in a whirl of amazement.

"I built up my theory first. I had known for some time that Huntingdon was hard up. It seemed probable to me that he might have gotten a false key made in the city. He had plenty of opportunities to take an impression of the lock. Then he waited his opportunity. He knew that Margaret would have her jewels here sooner or later. When Howard gave her an extra key it lessened Huntingdon's chances of detection. I presumed that on the evening of the robbery he had gone into the study without noticing in the twilight that Howard was asleep on the lounge. He had secured the money and jewelry, when he incautiously made some noise that awoke Worthington, and he heard his cousin rise and fumble for a match. If a light were struck then Huntingdon would inevitably be detected in the crime. So, with superb presence of mind, he simulated Margaret's voice outside the door. The ruse succeeded. As Howard left the room, he followed, and a few moments later made those remarks to his cousin which confirmed the belief of Margaret's presence in the hall and made Worthington nearly frantic with suspicion. This was my theory, and next day, when I succeeded in getting a powerful magnifying glass, I examined the lock of the safe with it and could easily detect traces of wax. Then I was sure of my premises, but Huntingdon had been infernally shrewd. He had contrived to throw suspicion on Margaret; consequently, Worthington could make no move in the matter and would not even allude to his loss."

"You are a veritable genius," Jean exclaimed; "but how did you ever get at the truth—to prove it, I mean?"

"I reasoned that Huntingdon would do nothing with the diamonds in this country; it would be risky. He had five hundred dollars. That would take him to Europe. Once there, he

could unset the stones, dispose of them separately and be practically safe from detection. I think he disliked my presence here, and half-suspected my motive in coming; so he resolved to go to Europe at once. It was necessary for the success of my plans that he should again be short of cash. Two nights ago I inveigled him into a game of poker, and as we put the stakes rather high I won easily all he had. I can't swear, though, Jean, that I played a strictly honest game."

She smiled. "I think you may count yourself absolved, anyway. Oh, how despicable that man is! I have never liked him. I could hardly forgive myself if I had ever entertained any friendly feelings for him."

"Didn't you really like him, Jean?" Ainslie asked, quickly. "That is a burden off my heart, for I half feared that you did. Well, that is about all there is to tell. Of course, he could not go to Europe without money, so I had Howard bring home a goodly roll yesterday, and, according to previous agreement, we made the matter fully known at the dinner-table. Huntingdon could hardly afford to let that chance slip, I thought, so I made ready for him. When I left you yesterday I rigged up an electric battery. It connected with the lock of the safe and with a small pistol. If everything worked all right, the pistol would go off as the safe door was opened. Still, I was a little afraid that my work was not very perfect, and that Huntingdon might slip in noiselessly, get the booty, and we, listening in the next room, be none the wiser. So I put you on guard over Margaret. I wished to prove that she was *not* the culprit, even if I could not prove who *was*."

"Your scheme was a success, of course?" Jean remarked.

"Yes; we waited in the library in total darkness. We dared not smoke or talk or read, for fear of betraying our presence. I suppose that Howard suffered tortures, for he didn't know what was coming. At last there came the pistol shot, and we rushed into the hall, to meet Huntingdon with the bills

actually in his hand! Howard flashed a dark-lantern in his face and I covered him with a revolver."

"Oh!" and Jean drew a deep breath; "how unutterably horrible it all is! Of course, he had to confess."

"At last, yes; though it took some forcible persuasion to convince him that he would better do so. Howard has his confession, duly signed and attested by me, and he also has the diamonds. We allowed Huntingdon to keep the thousand dollars provided he leaves the country never to turn up again. We took him to the train when we drove off."

Jean walked on in silence for a long time, pondering the story. At last she said, "You told me that you had a special reason for wishing me to know this story. What is it?"

"Well," Ainslie responded, gravely, "it is one of my convictions that a man ought not to keep any secrets from his wife, and, as I hope you will consent to be my wife, I thought that I would better tell you all about this affair."

Jean looked up at him in indignant surprise, not knowing just what he meant.

"You acknowledged yesterday, Jean," he said, lightly, "that you owed me a debt of gratitude for executing your commissions so faithfully. You would better give me your hand as payment. Do, dear," he added, with a sudden change of expression and with a look in his eyes that caused Jean to forget her anger and made her say, softly:

"If you really think I ought to do so——"

Then those two young people wandered far away into that "new world, which is the old."

It was nearly two hours later when they reached Worthington's house.

"I almost dread to go in," Jean said, nervously.

"Why, are you ashamed of me?" Ainslie asked, with mischief in his eyes.

"I wasn't thinking of you at all then," Jean rejoined, with a little

blush. "I was wondering on what terms we should find Margaret and her husband. I hardly see how she can forgive him."

"Couldn't you forgive me for a like offense?"

"I shouldn't like to be tried, Robert. In the first place, I do not believe you would ever doubt me, no matter how strong the circumstantial evidence against me might be."

"No, Jean, you are right," Ainslie said, gravely. "I certainly should never doubt you; but I hope that Margaret will prove forgiving. Come, we shall probably find them in the study."

They were there, as Ainslie had surmised, and it needed only one glance at their faces to show that all was well with them.

Margaret met Ainslie with outstretched hands. "I have just been hearing how true a friend you have been to me. I thank you from my heart, but words seem very poor to express my feelings. You need not wait for my allowance, after all, Mr. Ainslie. Here is my husband's check for a thousand dollars. We are not going to have any more misunderstandings on the money score."

Ainslie smiled down on her with cordial friendliness. "Mrs. Worthington, there is just one little thing

which I still fail to understand. I wonder if you will enlighten me? Why were you so reluctant to ask Howard for this particular sum?"

Margaret blushed and hesitated, feeling the eyes of all upon her.

"Yes, dear," Worthington said. "I want to understand that, too. Whatever your feelings ordinarily, I should have thought that you would have applied to me on this occasion."

"I must tell you, I suppose, though I had not intended to do so. You read the first part of my letter to mother, so you know that I promised to get her the money. I intended to ask you for it. Of course, I disliked doing so, but under the circumstances I saw no other course. I went down stairs to find you. You did not hear me open the door. You were reading mother's letter to me, and I softly slipped out again. I thought that, of course, you would give me the money at once, voluntarily; you never mentioned the matter, although you knew my need. I could not appeal to you after that."

Worthington sighed. "My love, I don't see how you can find it in your heart to forgive all of my stupid idiocy. I have been cruel and——"

Margaret laid her fingers on his lips. "Hush," she said, gently.



AN OPTICAL ILLUSION

DEAR Jane, your picture is a dream,
Aye, 'tis perfection quite,
The lips, the eyes, the shapely form—
With one exception slight.

The gown seems cut a bit too low;
Yet, since you're counted shy,
It must be that those shoulders plump
Were cut a bit too high.

LOUIS J. KELLER.

LO, "THE GREAT AMERICAN NOVEL"

By Eloi De Vaux

THERE is a rumor from Publishers' Row that the filing of an affidavit similar in form to the following will hereafter be a necessary preliminary on the part of authors in submitting the manuscripts of novels for publication:

Know all Men by these Presents, the undersigned, "Pro Bono Publico," deposes and says:

That he is the author of a novel of 85,000 words, more or less, entitled, "John Doe and Richard Roe, the Twain Euphonious and Inseparable;"

That the story is *not* rendered into modern English from an original manuscript written by the great-grandfather of the author, and found in a certain oaken chest or secret drawer;

That it is *not* a memoir, diary or record of events that happened in the reign of the "Good Queen Bess," or of the most valiant monarch, Louis the 101st, or of any other sovereign, prince or potentate;

That it contains not a single reference to suits of armor, dungeons, *lettres-de-cachet* or privy seals; nor to Knights of the This and That or Lords of the Thus and So;

That he (the author) hereby covenants and agrees, if, among its pages, a duel be fought or a solitary sword even so much as leaps from its scabbard, to forfeit his entire right, title and interest in the manuscript to the discoverer of such duel or of such sword leaping from its scabbard;

That the author hereby still further covenants and agrees (on his part) to the exclusion from the book of Author's Foreword, Explanatory Notes, Sketch of "The Author and the Book," and his Picture;

That the book is written (to the best of his knowledge) in United States English (save the mark!), and contains no quotations of any kind, save those of the Stock Exchange (and these not from choice, but of necessity);

That the story treats of the lives of John Doe and Richard Roe, but not of their Adventures (praise God, they had none!), and, incidentally, of the most modest damsel, Virgin Page, who at all times appears most becomingly habited (generally bound in cloth), never once donning doublet and hose or other male attire.

The author further covenants and agrees, provided the sales of this book exceed 75,000 copies, under no circumstances to attempt the writing of any novel or tale after the manner and style of the story herein named, and, to evade a possible temptation so to do, he hereby binds himself for the term of three years from the date of the publication of the book herein named, to write "pot-boilers," or, in other words, the text that accompanies the illustrations in the up-to-date ten cent magazines, thus absolutely precluding the production of *literary* work of whatsoever description during the time specified;

And finally,

That the author covenants and agrees in no event to give his consent to

the dramatization of this story under a term of seventy-five years from date of publication, it being his most cherished wish that, for at least three-quarters of a century, "John Doe and Richard Roe, the Twain Euphonious and Inseparable," shall be subjected to no profaner touch than the mellowing one of time.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal this — day of —, in the year one thousand nine hundred.

"PRO BONO PUBLICO"
(*Author's Signature*).

Sealed and Delivered in the Presence of
"A DELIGHTED CONTEMPORANEOUS OPINION"
(*Signature of Witness*).



IN OTHER DAYS

WHAT I have had, dear heart, dear heart—
The love and life—is mine!
Thou canst not alter any part;
Why break the empty glass, dear heart,
From which we quaffed the wine?

The kisses I have had of thee
Are mine, dear heart, are mine!
The day-long dreams, the hopes, the fears,
The sunshine coming after tears,
Are all a very part of me,
Dear heart, are mine, are mine!

The love, the laughter and the love,
Are mine, dear heart, are mine!
Remembered sweetness of thy mouth—
The rose-wind blowing from the South—
The promise of thine eyes, dear heart—
The soft, South rose-wind dies, dear heart,
But not these dreams of mine.

What I have had, dear heart, dear heart—
The life and love—is mine!
Thou canst not alter any part;
'Tis mine, dear heart—and thine!

HENRY HOLCOMB BENNETT.



AN ACCURATE DESCRIPTION

LITTLE ELMER—Papa, what is a Turkish bath?
PROFESSOR BROADHEAD—It is something, my son, that, so far as there is any record, a Turk never takes.

MY NIECE, MRS. DOVE

By Caroline K. Duer

WHEN Amelia first proposed my going abroad with her I made some faint resistance. I knew it would be ineffectual, but I felt it was due to myself.

"I'm too old," cried I.

"You are at the nicest middle age in the world," said Amelia, patting my hand, "and you are the sweetest and handsomest gray-haired lady in the land, and I do so love to be with you."

"Too old, I mean, to enjoy flying about the Continent as you do, my dear," I continued, hastily, knowing that my downfall was certain, but making a show of firmness.

"But you needn't fly about, dear Aunty, not once. You know you will enjoy the voyage because you are such a wonderfully good sailor, and you have never been by the Southern route. Then, when we get to the other side, you shall just settle down in some beautiful, quiet place, with the children to amuse you—they are such ducks!—and I'll do the flying about by myself," said Amelia, with an air of engaging virtue.

It had occurred to me that I might be of some use to my niece beside the comfort she derived from the society of the "handsomest gray-haired lady in the land." Now everything was explained.

"So the children are to go!" I said.

"Yes," answered Mrs. Dove, the thoughtfully tender expression of the true mother stealing over her face. "I couldn't be separated from them for a whole Summer. You don't know what they are to me, dear Aunty. Nobody does."

I did not remind Amelia that she

had found it quite possible to bear a whole Winter's separation from the children, during which time their grandmother had had the entire charge of them. Her great blue eyes would have filled with tears at the recollection of the suffering she had secretly endured while ostensibly leading a life of moderate gaiety at Aiken.

Mr. Dove had been dead for a little more than a year. He had succumbed to a violent cold caught while camping out in the Adirondacks. Amelia, who had nursed him with the greatest devotion, now bore his loss with amazing fortitude, and administered the small property left to her with judicious care.

"Won't it be rather an expensive trip?" I ventured, not finding a suitable reply to my niece's last remark.

"Well, you know I must go somewhere for the Summer," said Amelia, clasping her hands behind her smooth, golden head. "I know it would have been a comfort to mamma if she could have kept the children, but Susie and Tom—" Amelia's sister and her husband—"got it into their heads that she really ought to have some change, so they absolutely insisted upon her spending the hot months with them at Bar Harbor, and, as the house is too small to take in the children, I thought it would be better to take them abroad with me. They are such companions to me, Aunt Charlotte; I miss them so when I am away from them."

"Why not stay here with them?" I suggested, knowing that the reasons against it would be admirable.

"Oh, I couldn't do that, dear Aunty.

Where could I go? I can't bear the mountains since—since poor Arthur's death, you know, and the seaside places in this country are horrid—except Newport, where I could not go this year. We'll go to the Italian lakes, you and I, Auntie, when it really gets hot, and have a delicious time all to ourselves. I'm very rich just now, really, and you always have plenty of money."

"What makes you so rich?" I demanded, with some curiosity, for Amelia did not often appear satisfied with the state of her finances.

"Well, you see, I have been speculating a little," returned my niece, confidentially. "At least, dear old Phoenix Morman did it for me. He is so kind! I told him I wanted to make some extra pennies in order to go abroad and live riotously, and he said he would make them for me. It was something he knew of that was so *sure* to turn out well that he did not even disturb my investments to get the money. He just lent it to me himself, and it turned out splendidly. He and I both made a great deal. Isn't it fun? He's going out on the vessel we go on, Auntie. Aren't you glad? He has a wonderful mind, and is such an interesting man. We have long talks together about all sorts of things."

Phoenix Morman's mind being one of the most marvelous money-making machines in the country, and Amelia's really by no means the least, I could imagine their long talks to be well worth listening to. The idea was amusing.

"The Bishop of Stillpenny is going over, too," went on Mrs. Dove, "and Mrs. Crosier, I suppose. Oh! and poor Mr. Wister, you know, whose wife died not long ago. They say he behaved wonderfully during her long illness. He is one of the most able and distinguished men of the day—isn't he, Aunt Charlotte?—besides being one of the richest."

"I believe so, my dear," I answered. "I never met him."

"Poor Auntie!" cried Amelia, rising and stealing a gentle arm round my

neck. "You have led a very shut-up life lately. Come abroad with me and see new places and people. You don't know what else to do with yourself, do you, dear? You shall have half my cabin, and I'll be so good to you, and you will be such a comfort to me."

So I yielded.

It was a warm day in the early part of April when we started. It had in some way been brought to my mind that by taking a four-wheel cab and stopping at the house for the children, their nurse and Amelia's maid, I should be doing what was greatly to my own advantage. Accordingly, I stopped before the abode of my niece at the hour named, and beheld the noses of Master Theodore and Miss Alicia Dove flattened against the drawing-room window in earnest watching for my approach. They disappeared from the window to burst out of the door as soon as it was opened, and immediately clambered into the carriage, volubly explaining to me that their mamma had gone out to do some shopping, but would join us on the dock at Hoboken, from which place our vessel sailed.

My heart sank. Amelia never hurried herself, and had once or twice been known to miss trains and boats altogether. The nurse, who had followed the children, reassured me a little.

"Madame had found herself obliged to attend to some forgotten business, but had left word that she should be at the dock before us—long before us."

Amelia's maid appeared with umbrella, bag, cloak and a pink pillow, without which Mrs. Dove never traveled. The various other bags and bundles appertaining to the party were put in, and we rumbled away from the door.

Theodore and Alicia sat by me on the back seat, Theodore, by reason of his more mature age, next the window. They were very quiet and well behaved, and with their golden hair and white apparel seemed quite fitted

to take their place among cherubs at a moment's notice.

"My mamma has to work very hard for such a little woman," said Theodore, reflectively, after a long silence.

"Wery hard," returned Alicia, with a sigh; "almost as hard as cook. But cook's going to be married to Officer Denny soon, and then she won't have to work no more, she says. Could mamma marry an officer, Aunt Charlotte?"

"She could," said I, briefly, "but I don't think it would please her. Look out of the window, Alicia. There's a fluffy white dog on the steps of that house."

"My mamma is going to take Nips abroad with her," declared Theodore. Nips was Amelia's bull terrier. "He's out in the carriage with her now."

"I trust you are mistaken, Theodore," I cried, in some dismay, for I did not relish Nips as a traveling companion.

"No, indeed," he returned, wagging his head solemnly. "What was it they said at afternoon tea yesterday, Alicia? When Mr. Raymond was there, you know."

"You are *such* a little woman to work so hard," quoted Alicia, absently, her attention absorbed by an organ-grinder.

"No—I said that to Aunt Charlotte already," cried her brother, with the air of having discharged himself of a holiday task. "I mean about Nips. Oh, I know. He said, 'Let me keep Nips for you; I want to keep *something* of yours.' And mamma said, 'No, you don't love Nips, and he said—'"

"Never mind, Theodore," I interposed, hastily. "Here we are at the ferry. Don't you want to pay for me?"

Mr. Raymond had adored Amelia for so long that his speeches could be foretold without much difficulty. The nurse and the maid exchanged demure glances.

The crossing did not take much time, and we had only a short distance to drive before we reached our destination.

Amelia was not there, of course. I searched the dock with my eyes as we drove along. I swept the deck with nervous glances. As soon as I could free myself from the children I went down to the cabin that I had been told I was to share with my niece. My own steamer trunk stared me in the face, and my bag, umbrella and rug had already been conveyed there by a nimble steward, but of Amelia's numerous belongings there was no trace. Even Nips, as a sign that his mistress had not deserted me—even that abominable, snorting bull terrier, would have been a comfort now.

The children, who had a cabin near by, chose this moment to escape from their nurse and burst in upon me with a torrent of questions.

Was that where I was going to sleep? Did ships always have round windows? Was the captain *ever* seasick? When would they be seasick? Theodore would rather have the "ammonia," really, than be seasick, but Alicia didn't mind, because she was only a girl.

I felt that I could cheerfully endure both nausea and the "ammonia," little as I knew of that unusual disease, if only Amelia would appear. She was so superbly capable of arriving too late and calmly taking the next steamer.

"Let us go on deck, my dears," I said, anxiously, taking Alicia's hand, "and watch for your mother. Your nurse and Francine will manage better down here without you, I dare say."

"My mamma will not come for a long time, I am sure," returned Theodore, skipping ahead; "she is most un-punk-shial. Grandmamma often says so to her."

As we passed through the saloon I noticed no less than three enormous boxes of flowers, two baskets of fruit, a large box from Maillard's, and a pile of books, all bearing the name of Mrs. Dove, and it comforted me vaguely to see these evidences of Amelia's expected arrival. A steward was staggering along with a wooden box, apparently containing cham-

pagne, and marked, I had no manner of doubt, with my niece's name. Theodore's head, which he carried rather low, the better to observe the number of skips he could accommodate to the pattern of the carpet, came into violent contact with this box, and in the momentary pause that ensued I verified my surmises and noticed, besides, that the card tacked on the case bore the "compliments" of Phoenix Morman.

We went up on deck, Theodore somewhat subdued in spirit and Alicia clinging to my hand. The utmost bustle and confusion reigned. Sailors and stewards passed swiftly to and fro, orders were shouted, groups of people gathered and dissolved in front of us. I saw the Bishop of Stillpenny and Mrs. Crosier arriving with Mr. Morman in his beautifully appointed carriage. Their appearance was most impressive as they descended from the vehicle and mounted the gangplank—the Bishop all blandness, from the bend of his large white nose to the curve of the handsome calf his gaiter so well displayed, and Mrs. Crosier carrying her small person as upright as a dart. Behind them Mr. Morman's huge figure and rugged, clever face arrested the attention suddenly as one realized how like he was to the somewhat unflattering caricatures the papers occasionally ventured to print of him.

A few minutes later the shore whistle was blown, and people began to take their departure. I was nearly frantic.

"Theodore," said I, "if your mother does not come I am going to get off this vessel."

Alicia looked very doleful. "We always has to stay until mamma comes," she said, with the patience of long habit.

At this instant a neat brougham drove down to the pier, and out of it stepped Amelia, followed by Mr. Raymond, laden with packages and flowers. Nips bundled up the gangplank ahead of them.

"Upon my word, Amelia," I cried, on the verge of nervous tears, "I

should have been off this ship in another moment. I really thought something must have happened to you."

"Oh, no, dear Aunt," returned Mrs. Dove, tranquilly. "I never am very early, you know, but I don't often miss things, do I, Ned?" turning to Mr. Raymond. "I had a great deal to do this morning, so I told Ned to send the brougham for me, and as he came with it I went and chose some horses for him, and such a pretty pony for you, Theodore—Mr. Raymond is going to keep it for you till we come back in the Autumn—and for you, too, my bird, my dear, sweet little yellow-haired Alicia, the tiniest pony you ever saw; and you shall both come out riding with your poor old mother, to take care of her." Amelia knelt down on the deck and hugged the children. "Then I went to get a copy of Dante in the original, Aunt Charlotte," she went on, looking up at me from the charming position she had unconsciously assumed, "and some Italian book—grammars and things, you know. I am going to study all the way over. And then Ned—"

"Ned ought to be going, if he will forgive me for saying so," I cried, in an agony. "They are taking away the gangplank." And so they were.

"Oh, he can go back with the pilot," said Amelia, rising. "Have you seen Mr. Morman, Aunt, or the Crosiers? And do tell me, how does poor Mr. Wister look?"

"I really don't know," said I, rather crossly. "I have not seen him."

"Oh, I do hope he is on board," said Mrs. Dove. "I want you to meet him."

Some time later Amelia followed me to my cabin, where I had retired to escape the contemplation of Mr. Raymond's silent agony of farewell.

"Ned's gone," she said. "Poor old Ned! he is good, but so dull! Aunt Charlotte, I am going to leave you this whole stateroom to your own self. It seems that Mrs. Morman meant to come, and then did not at the last moment, and dear old Phœ-

nix insists upon my taking her room. It's a deck room, you know. I couldn't have afforded it myself, but, as he says, why not occupy it, when it's just standing there empty? You don't mind, do you, Aunt? I'll leave you Nips if you are afraid to be alone."

"I don't mind being alone, thank you," said I, hastily. "And they wouldn't allow you to leave Nips in this part of the boat."

"I'll make Mr. Morman see the Captain about it," said Amelia. "I think I'd feel happier about both of you if you were together. I wonder where my birds are—aren't they the dearest little creatures in the world? Theodore was walking up and down the deck with the Bishop, and Alicia was sitting on Mrs. Crosier's lap when I came down. Everyone loves the children; they are so serious; they are companions to anybody, the funny little owls!"

I suggested going up on deck to fetch the funny little owls before the long, lazy Atlantic swell began to have any effect upon them.

"I have an idea they will be good sailors, like you and me, Aunt," said Amelia, "but don't let me keep you if you want to go up. They will be so pleased to see you! I must stay and speak to Francine about some things I want got out of my trunk."

The first people I saw as I stepped out into the fresh air were Mrs. Crosier and Alicia, cosily ensconced in the same chair. They welcomed me cordially and invited me to sit near them.

"This is the most quaintly solemn child I ever saw," remarked Mrs. Crosier to me. "And the boy is delightful." Theodore here passed us, in earnest conversation with the Bishop. "Their mother seems to have been very particular about their bringing up."

"She selected very good people for them to be with whenever her duties called her elsewhere," I returned, cautiously. "Alicia, my dear, do you feel at all seasick?"

Alicia shook her head. "No, Aunt

Charlotte, I don't think so, but I erlieve Theodore does, for he made a funny face just now—just like those gentlemen in the particular partoons [political cartoons] Nanna shows us in the amusin' papers."

"Why doesn't he go down stairs, then?" said I.

"Oh, mamma promised him he might say his evening hymn to that Bishop—Mr. Bishop, I mean," returned Alicia, "and he doesn't think it's late enough yet to begin."

As she spoke Theodore passed again, looking pale and determined.

"Don't you want to come with me and see whether we can find your mother's stateroom, Theodore?" I asked.

"In a few minutes, Aunt Charlotte," he returned, heroically; "as soon as I've said 'For those in peril on the sea.' Is it too soon to say it?" he added, turning to the Bishop.

"Not at all too soon, I should say," answered the Bishop, laughing outright. So Theodore took off his hat and recited the whole hymn with much gravity, Alicia echoing such words as she could catch. He then put his cold little hand in mine, bowed to the company and suffered me to lead him away.

I found Amelia without much difficulty. She had the largest and most beautifully decorated cabin on the boat. It was filled with flowers, books lay on the sofa, the box of candy had been opened, and a delicate little pair of tongs marked the especial compartment to which Mrs. Dove's attention had last been directed. Francine and a steward were on their knees trying to pull out the steamer trunk, which had got caught under the berth. I wondered how long Amelia had known she was to occupy these palatial quarters. I remembered that the trunk had never been in my cabin at all.

"Theodore feels ill," said I, addressing my niece's back as she stood in front of the glass smoothing her hair.

"Does he?" cried Amelia, turning round. She lifted the boy in her

arms, pushing the books onto the floor as she laid him on the sofa. "Poor little Theodore! What shall I give him, Aunt? Why, he's quite cold. Dear chick! Mamma is so sorry!" She smoothed the hair away from his forehead and kissed him tenderly.

"I feel better now I am flat," remarked the young gentleman, "and I said my hymn to the Bishop before I came away."

"Did you, my sweet?" said his mother. "That was so good in you. Isn't he a duck, Aunt Charlotte?"

"He is," I returned, absently. "Amelia, when did Mr. Morman ask you to take this cabin? After you came on board?"

"Oh, no; he spoke to me about it the other evening when I dined with him at the Waldorf," said Amelia, simply.

At this point Alicia appeared, to announce that she had lost her hat overboard. Mrs. Crosier, who accompanied her, appeared to feel rather guilty about the accident and apologized at some length for her negligence, but Amelia's gentleness blamed nobody. She only said, in her caressing way, that they must borrow one of the sailors' hats for Alicia if she lost any more of her own.

Mrs. Crosier was charmed with her, and the two paced the deck for an hour or more, while Francine arranged the contents of the trunk and I told the children stories.

When, at length, they consented to go down to their cabin, and I was free to join Amelia, the Bishop's wife had left her, and she was in earnest conversation with a short, fat, round-eyed little woman, not unlike a frog in a black dress, from whom she separated as I came toward them.

"That's Mrs. Robberly, the dress-maker," she remarked, taking my arm. "Such a funny old woman! She has just offered to make me some gowns for nothing if I will choose one or two good models for her as we come back through Paris; wear them once or twice, you know, and bring them in for her. Poor old thing! I

think it would be kind of me to help her, don't you, Aunt Charlotte? People have such a hard struggle to live in these days. I don't care about clothes myself, but one must be decently dressed, and, as I am not rich, I suppose I ought to be glad to get my frocks as cheaply as possible."

"Who pays for the model gowns?" I inquired, with some curiosity.

"Oh, Mrs. Robberly does," said Amelia, "I couldn't afford it. Shall we go and dress for dinner now, Aunt? I am really hungry. And, as you go down, will you stop and see if the children are all right? I am anxious about Theodore."

But later, when I attempted to report to Amelia—across the table, where she sat between the Captain and Mr. Morman—that her maternal anxieties were needless, I found it impossible to engage her attention, so gravely absorbed and intelligently interested did she appear in the discussion of wireless telegraphy which was taking place between her two neighbors.

When I bade her good-night she was reading Dante with the Bishop, but she had not been unmindful of my comfort. Nips was asleep in the middle of my berth, and the cabin resounded with his snores.

We ran into a storm that night, and for some days afterward were so tossed about that I took the precaution to stay in my berth, not on account of seasickness, but because I felt that there was great danger of breaking some of my elderly bones if I got up. Most of the passengers on the ship followed my example, but not so Amelia. She was up and about as usual. She used to come in to see me, with her hair glistening with the salt spray and her face as pink as a rose.

"It is so marvelous on deck, Aunt," she said, one day, nestling into a corner of the sofa. "Such a grand sight! Mr. Morman and I have been walking up and down for an hour. Those great, hungry, gray waves racing after us, and the flashes of white spray flying past against the blackness of the sky. The sea is

wonderful, isn't it? You can think great thoughts and feel great feelings when you are face to face with a power like that. I seemed so little, so little—and all my small hopes and ambitions were swept away like straws in the wind. That's a very pretty dressing sacque you have on, you dear, nice lady, and what quantities of real lace they trimmed it with! That's one of the very few extravagances I permit myself, real lace—it is so ladylike. Mr. Morman gave me a beautiful black lace fan for my birthday. He is a wonderful man, Aunt Charlotte. So big, you know; such a large nature!—though, perhaps, not quite so noble as Mr. Wister's. I can't imagine Mr. Morman putting his sorrow behind him and taking up life again in the wonderful way Mr. Wister has. And he doesn't understand one so quickly."

"Bless my soul!" said I. "I forgot all about Mr. Wister. Surely he wasn't at table the first night out? I don't think I saw him."

"No," said Amelia. "He sprained his ankle just before we sailed, and he has been confined to his cabin, poor dear! I sent him down a lot of fruit and books when I heard of it, and I got such a nice note from him. He likes just the things I like; and what an acute mind he has! I go and talk to him every day now, I and Mr. Morman, who insists upon chaperoning me. Dear old Phoenix! It's very kind of him, but, somehow, I think we should get on better without him. He is a little possessive, you know. He seems to feel that I am under his charge, which is so ridiculous. I must give him a hint about it. Because a person is generous and likes to give pretty things and make life easy for people, is no reason why he should be dictatorial, is it?"

"Really," I exclaimed, "I think Mr. Morman is entirely right to consider it not quite nice for you to go and sit with Mr. Wister alone."

"Do you, dear?" said Amelia, kissing me. "How old-fashioned you are! As if anything a nice woman

did could be otherwise than nice! The only thing to be is just true and simple," continued Mrs. Dove, reflectively, "and then let people say what they please. I am sure Mr. Wister does not misunderstand. Though I don't think he is very sympathetic with Mr. Morman. What a rare thing perfect sympathy is, especially between men!"

"How are the children?" I asked, abruptly, for I cannot always breathe in those lofty heights to which Amelia soars.

"Oh, poor little birds, they were very ill for ever so long," returned she, "and Theodore did nothing but groan, 'Oh, this is agony,' but Alicia slept nearly all the time. Their nurse was ill, too, and so was Francine. I had to get Mr. Morman to lace my—"

"What?" cried I, as she paused. Amelia's unconventionality was a trifle alarming.

"—boots every morning," continued my niece, struggling with a yawn. "Excuse me, Aunt Charlotte, I am sleepy because I was up late last night with a poor woman in the second cabin who was awfully ill. The stewardesses were too busy to attend to her, so I went. I think she has got pneumonia. I had a consultation with the doctor about her."

"Is there nothing we can do?" I asked.

"No, she is getting every care now. I paid a woman to look after her. I think we ought to help everybody we can. It is a privilege to be allowed to help other people."

"Let me enjoy it too, then. You'll find my purse in that bag over there."

"You are awfully good, dear Aunt, but indeed it is not necessary. Mr. Morman gave most generously the moment I mentioned the case to him. I had meant to give a little, too, for I played *écarté* with him last evening after dinner, and it seemed only right to give some of my winnings, but he would not let me."

"Did you win much?" I asked.

But Amelia had left the room, and I heard her voice cooing and laugh-

ing in the sweetest way with the children in the neighboring cabin.

The next days were calm enough to tempt me up on deck, and at about twelve o'clock one morning I was walking toward the open door of Amelia's gorgeous stateroom. I may be old-fashioned, as my niece says, but I do not, and never shall, think it proper for a young woman to receive persons of the opposite sex in her room, especially when she is not up yet. Amelia looked like a Madonna. She had a blue ribbon in her hair, a wonderful lace dressing-sacque over her wonderful lace nightgown, and a beautiful blue silk cover thrown over her bed, but, all the same, she was in bed, and I was amazed when I found that the Bishop of Stillpenny was playing at chess with her.

"Good-morning, Aunt Charlotte. Isn't the Bishop good?" cried Amelia, pausing with her white hand on an even pinker bishop than Joseph of Stillpenny. "I was wretched this morning, and so lonely, and when he passed the door I could not resist calling him, and he has been comforting me ever since. It must be so glorious to know that wherever you go you bring comfort."

"It would be very glorious if I could hope it were so," said the Bishop, in his rolling, sonorous voice. "Ah, my dear child, I wish it were in my power to give you real comfort. Checkmate! So it is. I must go to Mrs. Crosier."

"We were talking of the impossibility of earthly relations beyond the grave, and of—of poor Arthur, you know," said Amelia to me. "I have always blamed myself that I insisted upon going to the Adirondacks that Summer. Perhaps I was wrong to try to retrench. It was *his* money, of course. Well! I am glad he had the good of it while he was alive."

As I remembered it, Arthur Dove's money had flown chiefly in the keeping up of an establishment for the amusement of Amelia and the use of her friends, but I knew Amelia did not think so.

"Sometimes," she continued, "I

feel as if I ought to do something for the children. Women do make money. They keep shops, or they write, or they——"

"Or they marry rich husbands," I suggested, idly.

"Oh, Aunt Charlotte, dear!" cried Amelia. "How can you say such a—forgive me—coarse thing to me? *I never* could marry again after—" Her eyes filled with tears.

I kissed her and begged her forgiveness, assuring her that I had meant nothing personal.

"I'm sure you didn't, dear, only there are some things one can't bear to have said," Amelia answered. "Now, we will forget all about it. Did you see the children this morning? They are with Mrs. Crosier, I suppose. Poor Alicia! Her nurse tells me it was her only hat that was lost overboard. I really think her grandmother might have allowed her another, the poor mite. And oh, Aunt, why did you banish Nips? Theodore tells me he is living with the cook."

"I hope he is," said I, "and that he is enjoying a greater freedom in breathing than he attained in the limited air space of my cabin. I think he's better off where he is."

"I must go and see him when I get up," said Amelia. "Please don't go, Aunt. Mr. Morman and Mr. Wister are coming to teach me bridge-whist directly, and we must have a fourth. I hope they will get on well to-day."

Mr. Wister was a tall, gray-haired, fine-looking man, with a splendid figure. His nose was clever; his eyes, if anything, a little close together. His manners were charming, suave and diplomatic, and his voice of a most agreeable quality. A greater contrast to the rugged-featured red face, brilliant, fierce eyes and stern, abrupt manner of Phoenix Morman it would be difficult to imagine. It appeared to me they did not like each other.

Amelia was wonderful with them both. Her dove-like eyes fixed first upon one and then upon the other,

she followed their every word of instruction. It occurred to me that her mastery of the game was astonishing for a beginner; certainly her luck was, and to my "old-fashioned" notions the stakes were high. But I was beyond protesting.

At the end of a game we suddenly heard a slight commotion on deck, and, on sending to inquire the cause, learned that we were in sight of the Azores.

Amelia was out of bed in an instant.

"Oh, give me my dressing-gown, Mr. Morman, like a dear," she cried, holding out her hand for a blue-silk and white lace garment that hung over a chair. "And, Mr. Wister, do find my slippers! I must see some land after all these watery days! I can't wait!"

She thrust herself into the things, and, followed by the gentlemen, pattered out on deck before I could recover the power of speech.

She was back in an instant.

"I must dress, Auntie. We shall be at anchor before long, and I mean to go on shore."

"Amelia, my dear," I said, seriously, "you really ought to be ashamed of yourself! What could those men have thought of you? I—you—my dear—you have no idea how *very* little you appeared to have on."

"Dear Aunt Charlotte," she returned, "Mr. Wister and Mr. Morman are gentlemen, and consequently could think nothing disagreeable of me. I am not ashamed of myself, but I am ashamed of you for attaching such unpleasant importance to such a simple thing. I am afraid we differ very greatly in our ideas on these matters." And such was her dignity that I went out from her presence abashed.

During the days of the storm Amelia had been most nautical in her appearance. A little yachting cap of Theodore's had adorned her golden head, and a short blue serge skirt and a double-breasted jacket with gold buttons showed off her trim figure

to great advantage. To-day, however, when, after keeping us waiting for some time, she stepped into the boat to go ashore, she looked like a little girl going to a garden party. A vision in white she was, crowned with a hat of apple blossoms and pink ribbons. Alicia, whose head had been somewhat ruthlessly thrust into an old scarlet Tam o' Shanter of her brother's, admired her mother exceedingly. So, apparently, did Mr. Wister, who watched our departure with an inscrutable smile.

"Isn't my mamma pretty?" Alicia asked, confidentially. "I think she is the very prettiest lady in the world."

Amelia, who was sitting next to her, turned and kissed the child. "What should I do without you, my precious bird?" she said. "You look rather hot in that Tam, Alicia. Mamma must give you this hat, mustn't she, when we get to the places where little girls need hats? Theodore, you will splash Mrs. Crosier if you fall into the water. Just hold him for me, dear Mr. Morman. What a pity Mr. Wister's ankle isn't well enough to let him come on shore! This is a beautiful place. Look! there's a thick hedge of camellias in that garden on the hill."

We were being rowed into the tiny crescent-shaped harbor of Ponte del Garda, on the island of San Miguel. A house curiously covered with light blue tiles, like a high mantelpiece, faced us, but for the most part the buildings were low, two stories being the average of the better class of them. We landed at some steps and walked under an arcade of white arches to the principal street. Amelia was in ecstasies. The little narrow ways, the tiny shops, the bullocks that dragged the water-barrels through the streets (and to avoid which we had to flatten ourselves against the walls of the houses) were all enchanting to her. And when we came to the little bull-ring, for all the world like the one in "Carmen," she could hardly contain herself. She wanted to leave the steamer then and

there, she said, and convey her party to the small English hotel, where, much to his surprise, Phoenix Morman had found two friends of his were staying. She wished, she declared, to explore not only San Miguel but every single island of the beautiful group.

Mr. Morman at once offered to stay with her, and she thanked him with a look of the most angelic renunciation.

"I believe you really would," said she, caressingly. "You are so unselfish. Oh, Mr. Morman, what a friend you are!"

"You little witch," he returned, endeavoring to lower his usually unreserved tones. "Be careful how you play with me! There is very little I would not do for you. But don't presume too far upon my *friendship*."

Amelia looked detached and pensive, as if in contemplation of some great moral problem, and, calling Theodore to her side, asked him if he had ever seen so pretty a place.

Theodore, however, was unimpressed by the beauties of the white convent with heavy black lava trimmings which we were passing at the moment. He said he did not care much for "abroad," and that he would rather see a Broadway cable car than anything his mother could show him in that place.

"You will see trolleys when you get to Genoa," said Amelia, laughing, and she walked on with Mr. Morman and left the children to Mrs. Crozier and me. She did not rejoin us for some time.

It had been decided that a party of us were to dine at the little hotel in the town. Mr. Morman gave the dinner, and Amelia, of course, was to be the chief guest, but to my surprise she complained of being very tired and declared her intention of going back to the ship with the children. As the fatigues of the day had given me a violent headache, I gladly seized the opportunity of accompanying her, at which she protested a little.

"Mr. Morman will be so disappointed that you can't go to his dinner!" she said. "You and the Cro-

siers, and that funny little Englishman and his wife whom we met at the hotel, were to be his only guests. I am awfully sorry I have had to give out, but I really am tired and must rest. Perhaps I'll be able to come back after dinner. The Captain said we did not start again till eleven o'clock. It must be lovely here by moonlight. Auntie, do you think I *could* take Francine and stay here, just till the next steamer comes, while you and the children went on to Genoa and waited for me? Mr. Morman wants me so much to do it, and I could be with his friends at the hotel, you know. Not that a woman in my position needs a chaperon. What do you think—could I do it?"

I stood aghast.

"I suppose you could, my dear," I gasped, "but I really hope you won't. I think it would be a mistake."

"Do you, Auntie? Then I'll think it over; but it will be a great disappointment to Mr. Morman. He had quite set his heart upon it, and I should have enjoyed it very much. I was to give the orders about the trunks when I went back now, and tell his servant and explain to the Captain."

"My dear Amelia," said I, "it would be a very wild thing to do. How do you know that you could get rooms in the next steamer that touches here, and, besides, consider the extra expense, if you won't consider appearances."

"I think there would be no difficulty about the rooms so late in the year," returned my niece, "and I suppose my part of the expense would be very little; but if you disapprove, dear, of course I will not do it. I never want to do what you really think wrong. Don't speak of it to Mr. Morman, will you? I will explain it to him, so that his feelings may not be hurt. Yes, I dare say—indeed, I am sure you are right. You are so wise, you don't know how I appreciate being with you. The world has an evil tongue. Does your head ache very badly?"

"Very badly," I returned.

"Then I won't tease you about another thing," said Amelia, petting me. "And I wouldn't leave you for a kingdom. And I'll tell Mr. Morman that we must take our little trip another time—when I am old!"

The gentleman in question now approaching us, Amelia walked aside with him, looking up at him with her wonderful eyes and gesticulating in her pretty way. He did not seem displeased.

"Everything is arranged," she said to me as we rowed back to the ship, Alicia half asleep and Theodore wholly cross from fatigue. "And now you shall all go straight to bed, and I'll come and tuck you up, and then I'll have my little scrap of dinner and go to bed myself, for I am very tired."

The next morning she came into my cabin looking as clear-eyed and rosy as a child.

"There's your coffee, Aunt Charlotte," she cried, gaily. "And how is your headache? We have left the Azores far behind in the night, with all their quaint little towns and their windmills and their gardens. And we have left Mr. Morman behind, too!"

"So he made up his mind to stay, in spite of your refusal to join him in his expedition?" cried I, in some surprise.

"Well, not exactly that, Aunt," murmured Mrs. Dove, gently. "You know, I thought he really would want to see those beautiful islands some time, and it was a pity to miss such a good opportunity, and his friends were there and all that, so, as I was afraid my change of mind might put him out of conceit with the plan, I did not tell him that I was not going. I just wrote him a little note when his man went ashore with the baggage. And then we steamed away into the night and left him. It was just as well, Aunt Charlotte; he was—I hardly know how to say it—" Amelia paused modestly—"but I think he was falling in love with me in his queer way. He said such odd things. It's curious, isn't it, Aunt, a man like that, with

such a head for figures and a mind for finance?"

"To say nothing of his being old enough to be your father, and having a wife and children," cried I, indignantly.

"But that doesn't stop men, Aunt Charlotte," said Amelia. "At least, not nowadays."

"Is that why you wouldn't dine with him?" I inquired, curiously. Amelia's motives were always so interesting.

"Oh, no," she replied, simply. "I couldn't have dined with him because I had promised to dine on board with poor Mr. Wister."

The Crosiers appeared slightly puzzled by the unexplained eccentricity of Mr. Morman's behavior. They were by way of traveling with him, and Mrs. Crosier confided to me that the Bishop was a good deal annoyed.

"So unlike Phoenix Morman to do a thing like that!" she said. "I never knew him to change his plans for anybody. He certainly gave me no reason to think he was going to stay. It is unaccountable."

"It is, indeed," I returned, guiltily, glancing involuntarily at Amelia, who was reading Italian under a parasol near by.

Mrs. Dove was demureness itself these days. She played with her children and read Dante—or said she did—with the Bishop, talked of the wonders of navigation with the Captain at meals, and devoted a great deal of her time to the solace of Mr. Wister. She and he used to play chess together every evening. She said that, nobly as he bore his sorrow, he did need sympathetic companionship, and he certainly appeared to get more of it now that Mr. Morman was no longer with us.

"You know he'll be Ambassador to England some day, Aunt Charlotte; they say there is little doubt of it. Rich, distinguished, noble-minded and handsome, and yet how hollow his life is! How paltry worldly advantages seem when one's heart is heavy. I know how it is. As I said to Mr. Wister last night, 'I have been through

the depths that you have been through. We can be friends, the closest, dearest friends.' "

And that very evening I came upon the closest and dearest of friends sitting together on deck, and I am very much mistaken if the broken-hearted widower was not holding Amelia's hand.

Still, I was not prepared for the announcement that she made to me on the evening of the day before we were to touch at Gibraltar.

"Dear Aunt Charlotte," she said, "shall you really very much mind taking the children and Nips on to Genoa? I—the fact is that William—" here she blushed a little—"I mean Mr. Wister, is getting off at Gibraltar to take a trip through Spain, and as he cannot bear to part with me—he loves me very dearly, Aunty—I have agreed to go with him. The Bishop

has consented to marry us to-morrow at the American Consul's at Gibraltar, and we shall spend our honeymoon in Spain and afterward come and join you at the Italian lakes. I'm afraid I have taken you rather by surprise, but the circumstances are not ordinary. Our position is unusual. It is a wonderful thing to feel that you suddenly have the whole comfort and happiness of another human being in your hands. I feel that I should not be doing right if I refused the responsibility that has been given me. I know I shall be a help to him. And my children—what a benefit such a man will be to them as they grow up! I shall go to Mrs. Robberly for part of my trousseau. How little we thought what this voyage would bring to pass, Aunt Charlotte!"

But I thought I might have guessed.



ONE OF CUPID'S TRICKS

WITH brush and easel burdened quite,
And not one feathered dart in sight,
Dan Cupid came one Summer day
A-faring down my sunny way,
And asked if he might stay a while
To paint upon my heart a smile.
I gave him leave; it seemed but sad
Such favor to deny the lad.
He sat him down beside my door
And painted for an hour or more.

Good lack, from then no peace I had
From that tormenting little lad.
Next day he came to paint two eyes,
Blue as the tint of Summer skies;
And then 'twas dimples, then a cheek
Where dimples might play hide-and-seek;
Beneath the smile a flash of pearls,
A snow-white brow, a mass of curls.
Thus on my heart he left a trace
That time can never more efface;
And then to work beside my door
That little rascal came no more.

HELEN GARABRANT.

LEARNING MORE OF LIFE

By Edgar Fawcett

FOR the first time in an age he almost decided that he had found his mother sharply out of humor. Occasionally, it is true, she had been dispirited, but her gloom had proved evanescent as a cloud-shadow on grass. Now there was permanency in it. She hadn't liked his staying in Italy till May; she regretted to hear him confess that he had been lazy in Rome and lazier still in Florence, as regarded collecting material for the new book he had long ago planned to write. Moreover, she felt genuinely sorry that she had come up to town from Putney with Rachel for the season. Putney, she found, was quite good enough for her—and for Rachel as well. They were so near the Heath, and what could be lovelier than the Heath all Summer long? Besides, one had so many nice old friends there.

"Then, too," added Mrs. Tremayne, with an intonation that amazed her son by being almost peevish, "London isn't what it was in *my* day. There's so much rush and bluster about everything. One doesn't live here any more; one bustles."

"My dear mother," was the reply, "you never had any 'day.' For you Time hasn't a grain of sand in his hour-glass. There you sit, with your placid, violet girlishness, precisely as you did when I was ten. And as for bustling, you never bustled in your life. You couldn't if you tried." He looked round the tasteful apartment, with its mauve tapestries, its etchings, its urnfuls of fresh roses. "What a jolly little house you leased here in South Kensington!"

"The rooms are so small and

stuffy, Ulric. If I don't look my sixty years in them, they've nevertheless given me several new wrinkles."

"That's because you and Rachel are so dissipated," said Ulric. "I met Vance Vincent this morning, and he says that he sees you everywhere, from the New Gallery Varnishing Day to the densest crush in Portman Square."

"Vance Vincent? Oh, yes; the man who edits that clever weekly journal, *Candor*. What a pity he allows Euphemia Stagge to write for it!"

"What a pity, indeed!" said a low voice in one of the doorways, and Rachel Orme came into the room. She went up to Ulric and gave him her hand. He kissed her on the cheek, as naturally as if she had been his real sister and not his adopted one. He had looked fondly into her face last evening, and had told her that she wrote the most charming letters in the world, and that they had sometimes made him feel like staying still longer away from home just to keep getting them every fortnight. Rachel had colored at this dubious compliment, and he had tenderly stroked her bronze hair and smiled into her shadowy, purplish eyes, assuring himself that he would rather see her imperfectly pretty, like this, with sweet, redeeming lures, than one of your grand, superexcellent beauties. They had been privately engaged for at least three years, but it always seemed to Ulric, in a dreamy way, as if the engagement had begun when they were boy and girl at Putney. He had the firmest intention of marrying her "before long," and he

was well aware that his procrastination of this fateful event was by no means comforting to his mother. As for Rachel herself, she always appeared the essence of complaisance. There were times when Ulric felt this to be suspiciously secure. Then, if there had dawned on the horizon of his relations with Rachel any new male image, he might have grown hotly jealous. But none had ever dawned.

"She understands me perfectly," he had said to his mother, in the stately old drawing-room at Putney, just before his last Italian tour. "She knows that a little more bachelorhood will do me no harm. She likes my 'Athelstane' and she likes my 'Mary Gray' still more; and she believes that if I can get the right coloring and atmosphere for 'Beldolcio' it will be a wedding-present of which any bride may feel proud."

"And may I order her trousseau after 'Beldolcio' is finished?" Mrs. Tremayne had asked, with a little humorous droop of the chin.

Ulric did not appear to have heard the question, and his mother went on: "It must be a pretty one, you know, for Rachel is no pauper. She has three thousand pounds a year, remember. So have you, for that matter."

Ulric laughed. "Most mercenary of mothers!" He rose and kissed his parent on the brow, then took out his watch, thinking of townward trains. "I see the tempting picture you draw. What oceans of fun a young couple can have on six thousand a year!"

"Rachel doesn't want oceans of fun," said the lady, with a sigh. "She wants only a large, calm, deep lake of it—your love."

"Oh, yes—of course, yes," assented Ulric, pulling at his pointed blond beard. This had been months ago. Soon afterward he had started for the South. "And now," his mother had recently mused, "he has come back, with 'Beldolcio' not only unwritten, but scarcely as yet even mapped out!"

"My boy was just speaking of Mr.

Vance Vincent," said Mrs. Tremayne, after Ulric had greeted her adopted child. "You know him quite well, Rachel, do you not?"

"Oh, I've met him at four or five dances," Rachel returned. "He's a great favorite. He goes everywhere. One marvels how he finds time to edit his clever paper."

"We were at Eton together," said Ulric. "I haven't seen *Candor* yet. Mrs. Cavendish, in Rome, promised to let me have a copy, and then gave it perfidiously to someone else. Is it so very clever?"

"Perhaps you won't think so," said Rachel, in her demure way. "I've heard it called rattlingly brilliant."

Ulric drooped his handsome dark eyes. "I detest rattlingly brilliant things."

The two ladies exchanged a glance. Ulric was to them the one supreme critic, just as he was the one supreme novelist. And here, it should be added, they were not alone in their verdict. Great vogue had greeted both "Athelstane" and "Mary Gray." To the rush of London fiction each had given pause. Reviews that rarely praised anything in letters had poured encomium upon both. Their sales had not been large at first, but were slowly growing. The best minds had been startled by their vital accents. "You ring your chimes in such high belfries," a famed poet had written their author, "that one fancies the very stars listen."

"But about that Euphemia Stagge," Mrs. Tremayne sighed. "People wonder that he lets her write serials in *Candor*. They attack him for it quite belligerently. Am I not right, Rachel?"

"Oh, yes," the girl said. "I've attacked him myself."

"And what excuse does he make?" inquired Ulric, rather carelessly.

"He's very frank," said Rachel. "Her lackadaisical stories, he tells me, 'circulate the paper.' And he must make money out of it, or bury it in that vast family vault (to quote his own words) where lie such legions of its kin."

"But Euphemia Stagge—of all inane scribblers!" Mrs. Tremayne shuddered. "That mixture of melodrama and mawkishness!"

"Mr. Vincent declares that she gilds the pill," pursued Rachel.

"She simply spoils his paper!" affirmed Mrs. Tremayne. "And 'gilding the pill' isn't very polite, either, to the young lady who has made such a hit there."

Ulric struggled with a grimace. "I do so deplore," he said, "hearing about young ladies who have made hits in newspapers—or books, either. One can count on one's fingers the women who have been able to write at all. For my part," he continued, "it sounds astonishing that Vance Vincent should be in want of money. He is heir to the baronetcy, and old Sir Marmaduke, his uncle, was very liberal with him once, as I chance to recollect."

"There's been a quarrel between Vance Vincent's mother and his uncle," said Rachel, with a decisive air that seemed to spring from solid funds of information. "Mr. Vincent approved his mother's second marriage, though it was not by any means a wealthy one, and Sir Marmaduke bitterly opposed it. As the estates are not entailed, Mr. Vincent may receive nothing save the title."

Here Ulric burst into a laugh. It was tinged with satire not wholly playful, and it drew from Rachel a slight start. "Good heavens," he exclaimed, "how familiar you are with Vance's affairs!"

"But, my *dear* Ulric!" said his mother, alertly on the defensive, "if Rachel sees Mr. Vincent everywhere—"

"Yes, yes, I perceive," said Ulric. "What about this young lady, however, who has made such a hit on my friend's journal?"

"Aileen Desmond is her name," replied Rachel. "Her essays on social subjects appear in *Candor* every week. They are thought very witty and remarkable. Just now all the town is talking about them."

Ulric tapped his forehead. "The

prodigy I'm asked to dine with this evening at Mrs. Carisfort's in Eaton Square. Jack Carisfort said to me, at the St. James's Club: 'You'll find Aileen Desmond just as delightful as her writings.' Not having read a line of the latter, I returned him an oracular nod."

"She and Mrs. Carisfort are very intimate," said Rachel. "I've seen her only at night. She never appears anywhere during the day. She declares that her literary work takes hours of toil, though it seems dashed off so spontaneously."

"Indeed," murmured Ulric, who had once spent two weeks brooding over what was now a printed page of his "Mary Gray." "Is she handsome?"

"She's of that clear Irish type," said Mrs. Tremayne. "It always lights up well in young women, and Aileen can't be over four-and-twenty. She and her mother have been living for several years down in Kent on what, as everybody imagined, couldn't be more than five hundred a year. But now they suddenly have popped up into town, and have got a rather modish little house in St. John's Wood. Of course, St. John's Wood is cheap enough; but Aileen's gowns, and the cab fares, and the servants' wages, and the little dinners—how on earth are these paid for? One hears persons rather vaguely say, 'Oh, it's her writing, you know.' But others think such an elucidation obviously absurd. Lady Sheila Desmond, her mother, an old friend whom I have been glad to meet again, is the soul of reticence. Curiously," progressed Mrs. Tremayne, growing reminiscent, "the Earl of Clogheen, who was himself poor, married all his five daughters to men poorer than himself. So it's truly a mystery how Aileen and her mother *are* making such a fine appearance."

"They say," supplemented Rachel, "that Aileen can't get more than ten pounds apiece for those essays in *Candor*, and some people laugh at the idea of her getting more than six."

"But doesn't Euphemia Stagge demand huge sums for *her* trash?" inquired Ulric. "How, then, can poor Vance afford the expensive instalments of her vulgarity?"

"When they ask him that," said Mrs. Tremayne, "he declares that Euphemia keeps him on a perpetual verge of bankruptcy."

"How good of her not to topple him over!" said Ulric. "Who, by the way, is this Euphemia Stagge?"

Rachel answered: "An old woman living in one of the eastern counties—Norfolk, I believe. It's reported of her that she has never gone anywhere, and never had a glimpse of the high life concerning which she weaves her sensational, sentimental tales, and for which the big public has so ardent an appetite. It has been stated, too, that her name is a pseudonym, though others have denied this quite roundly."

"More mystery," smiled Ulric. "If Vance is at the dinner this evening I shall pump him with questions."

He did not do so, however, for Miss Desmond prevented. One moment he thought her almost ugly, with her arched nose, vividly florid tints and aggressively white teeth. Then he caught himself liking her dimples and the exquisite "rose-misted marble" of her long, full throat, and the odd gold-and-black of her full-fringed eyes. Vance Vincent was there, and Lady Cassimeere, a silly little society woman with reckless cosmetics and a voice all pert pipings, whom he had long ago disliked. Most of the other people he thought vapid and shallow, and this decision was not modified by the evident court which they all paid to Aileen. She was, plainly, the idol of the hour. He could not deny, however, that she bore her idolatry rather well. He did not take her down to dinner, but she sat next him, and they would now and then exchange words. These, on her own part, were for some time both desultory and constrained. The tide of talk kept constantly flowing toward her, and a

good deal of it was charged with fulsome compliment, which she sometimes parried with a dignity, a gentle disapprobation, that he could not but silently laud. And at last, when the converse had grown more general, she turned to him, saying almost below her breath:

"I can't tell you, Mr. Tremayne, how this chatter of eulogy wearies me. It is quite insincere, too. My writings—which doubtless you haven't even seen, there in *Candor*—are really lame and poor. Nobody realizes it more keenly than I. Mr. Vincent has been kind in letting me print them—that is all. And praise in *your* presence pierces me with embarrassment. Ah, they don't dare to discuss *you* so flipantly! I should be up in arms if they did." Her voice almost broke as she hastened on. "I admire your 'Athelstane' so deeply that I have a sense of irreverence in speaking of it here and now. And your 'Mary Gray' I *love* so deeply that in such case the irreverence would turn to actual sacrilege."

When the ladies had gone and the men began their smoking Ulric rose with the intent to join Vance Vincent. But the latter met him half-way, and caught his arm with a pressure covert though surprising.

"Here, Ulric," he muttered. "Let us take these seats; I do so want to speak with you. I wonder if you noticed me during dinner. I felt like a death's-head. All that fusillade of flattery leveled at Aileen Desmond sounded sillier than ever before. The truth is, I'm in an utter fix, an abominable hole."

Ulric scanned his old friend's face, so full of the fine lines that Vincent's habit of clean shaving brought into a kind of classic relief. The azure flash of his crystal eye was to-night unwontedly vivid.

"You're excited, Vance," he said. "What is it?"

"My Uncle Marmaduke is very ill. He quarreled with my mother, you know, for having married Captain Blatchford, whom he chose to snub, though there isn't a better chap in

the whole British army. I told him so, siding with mother, and he disinherited me. Now he has sent for mother, and she's there with him at his place, Deendale, down in Nottinghamshire. And mother has most impressively wired for me, stating that Uncle Marmaduke may last on for a fortnight or more, and that he has spoken of forgiving me, changing the will in my favor and all that. But he is still the very essence of caprice, wanting to see me one hour and hinting of an altered will, then, the next, insisting that I personally insulted him—which, by the way, is altogether untrue. Meanwhile, the doctors give no hope whatever of his final recovery, and even assert that any moment he may suddenly pass away. Mother has just sent me a third wire, imploring me to join her at Deendale. Of course I ought to go—of course I must. But there is *Candor*. If I start to-morrow it utterly perishes, unless I can find someone to take my place. But whose taste could I trust? As I look about among my literary friends I cannot decide upon a single one. And why? Because there is not one devoid of the self-love that would promptly begin to exploit itself as soon as my back is turned. But in you, Ulric, I could repose perfect faith. You could seat yourself in my office-chair to-morrow, read four or five of my back numbers, and would at once perceive my policy, and firmly, unostentatiously, carry it out. Your own reputation is so great that *Candor* could not add to it, and your editorial interregnum need never transpire. Ogilvie would keep this a profound secret; he would never let anyone enter your sanctum unless you were disposed to allow it. Ogilvie is about twenty-eight, thin as a rail, faultlessly dressed, discreet of visage, one of the most perfect gentlemen I know, and in some respects one of the most perfect fools. In other respects, however, he is the soul of tact. I have trained him to exercise the latter gift, until he now employs it with a superb suppleness. My dear Ulric, if you will only do this thing for me I

will bless you all the days of my life! Ogilvie will be ready to welcome you in Southampton street while I am taking the train for Nottinghamshire." Then more words of entreaty followed, and Ulric, at first detesting the proposal, gave ultimate consent, while detesting it none the less.

Northward darted Vance Vincent the next day, and cityward Ulric dragged himself, to the office of *Candor*. As he did so a sudden thought struck him: he had forgotten all about Euphemia Stagge. Vance had not mentioned her, and now, alas, he was to be saddled (as in sombre soliloquy he expressed it) with her burden of twaddle. However, the whole affair would not last long, and perhaps, after all, it might develop a pungent element of fun. Mr. Ogilvie, receiving him with unctuous politeness, soon buried him comfortably in a lofty little sepulchre of an office that gave him, from its one narrow window, glimpses of Charing Cross Station, besides a top segment of the Nelson column in Trafalgar Square. During his first day he read about ten manuscripts and rejected all but one. This he thought rather bad as literature, but effective as "copy." Afterward he revised some proofs, discussed the general drift of next week's issue with Mr. Ogilvie, and went home. The next day, however, matters were less easy. In the morning he received a copious telegram from Vance Vincent, stating that Sir Marmaduke was now temporarily better, but had been seized by a perverse whim as regarded seeing him, and hence, chiefly for this reason, the stay down at Deendale would be indefinitely prolonged. A little later Mr. Ogilvie appeared, looking much embarrassed. With visible effort he brought out the fact that a gentleman had presented himself at the main entrance of the *Candor* quarters and insisted on meeting the principal editor of the paper. He was not to be repulsed by any statement of "not in," and had planted himself on a chair one or two rooms away, with the expressed de-

termination of waiting until an audience could be obtained. Meanwhile, Mr. Ogilvie had handed Ulric a card, at which he now glanced. On it he read with surprise the name of Joyce Garmoyle. He knew the owner of this name decidedly well. During the latter eighties Ulric had made a trip to South Africa, and in his "Mary Gray" two or three of the Transvaal chapters had been considered strikingly fine. At Johannesburg he had met this Anglo-African millionaire, a man of about his own age, and received from him certain memorable hospitalities. He at once said to Mr. Ogilvie, making the latter's doleful confusion blossom into joyous relief:

"Oh, Mr. Joyce Garmoyle; of course. We are very good friends. Please at once show him in."

Garmoyle gave an amazed start on seeing Ulric. "*You!*" he exclaimed, with something between scowl and smile. "But you're certainly not—?"

"The editor of *Candor*? By no means. Please be seated and I'll explain."

Garmoyle's handshake had been oddly limp. "Explain?" he said, sinking into a chair. "There's a great deal of explaining to be done, though Vance Vincent, not you, I should fancy, is the man to do it."

Ulric puzzledly drew his brows together. Then, while surveying the big, smart-appareled frame and the bluff, homely, yet agreeable face, he told why and how he chanced to be found, just then, in Southampton street.

Garmoyle stroked, with large, strong fingers, his thick red mustache. "Now listen to *me*, if you please," he shot out, with hostile vehemence. "I don't know this Vincent well at all. I've met him only here and there at places since I sailed home last March from the Cape. Occasionally, by the way, he has been in the society of Miss Rachel Orme, your . . ."

"My mother's adopted daughter," supplied Ulric.

"Ah, yes; . . . quite so. Well,

my good friend, to be rather brief and succinct, Vance Vincent is doing a horribly shabby thing. You may know that he has printed one serial story in *Candor* by Euphemia Stagge, and that he is now printing another."

Ulric nodded. "I have just been glancing over some of Euphemia Stagge's proof-sheets," he muttered, sombrely.

Garmoyle threw both hands into the air. Then he envisaged Ulric with sorrowful sternness. "You're in perfect ignorance!" he announced. "Yes, I'm certain of it. *You* simply *couldn't* descend to such a thing!"

"Such a thing! What thing?"

Garmoyle's reddish-hazel eyes grew fiery. "Forgery!" he replied, between curling lips.

Ulric had a sense of creepiness. "I don't understand," he began.

"Evidently you do *not*. How *could* a man like *you*? Euphemia Stagge died in Norfolk at the age of seventy-seven, six months before *Candor* first appeared."

Ulric answered, at first, with a blank stare. Then he faltered: "Oh, but she may have left posthumous work, you know."

"I *do* know. She was my great-aunt, and her name wasn't Euphemia Stagge at all. It was Mrs. Cleeve. She never left a line of posthumous work. Everything she wrote was only too salable for that, nonsense though most of it should be called. I've lately been down into Norfolk. I've made inquiries. Only a short time ago I became aware of Mrs. Cleeve's death. At the country home in which my great-aunt dwelt I found a cousin of hers, Mrs. Wray. Mrs. Wray is nearly seventy, very deaf, and a person whose feeble intellect time has not improved. I had great difficulty in persuading her to tell me certain facts, but at last succeeded. Vance Vincent had been down there months ago. He had got her 'permission' (as if the poor, anæmic old thing could legally give any!) to let him publish future fiction under the name of Euphemia Stagge. Mrs. Cleeve had always cloaked her real

identity as an author with sedulous secrecy. Hence her death was not identified with the less material one of Euphemia Stagge." Here Garmoyle laughed with low, staccato sarcasm. "Well," he continued, his face clouding harshly, "what do you think of it all, Ulric? Isn't it a shocking piece of fraud in Vance Vincent?"

"Fathomlessly," sighed Ulric. "Who on earth can the new Euphemia Stagge be?"

"I've not an idea. Have you?"

"Not the phantom of one."

After more talk, Ulric induced Garmoyle to let the matter remain in abeyance until Vincent's return to London. This was really not a hard task. Garmoyle was very fond of his friend, and he was also one of those whom his friend's two novels had reverentially captivated. Having exploded his wrath against Vincent in this vicarious, yet ardent, fashion, he gave ready promise of reticence regarding the whole affair. But he was not satisfied until Ulric had consented to rattle off with him in a cab and lunch at the Savoy Hotel on a bird and some Château Yquem. During luncheon Garmoyle had much to say about the graces and charms of Rachel Orme. "Lucky chap," he declared; "you're going to marry one of the sweetest girls in England! And I hear that you deserted her all Winter to 'pick up material' in Italy. Well, your next novel may be a stunner, as I don't doubt it will, but you're a cold-blooded wooer, none the less. That's the way with all you superfine writers—you sacrifice heart to art."

Ulric felt guilty, even cowardly, in treating these words with silence. He felt, too, that Garmoyle sought to draw him out. He fancied that his mother must have dropped certain hints to the young South African Croesus. Rachel had surely never done so. He could not quite understand his own reserve. Did the memory of Aileen Desmond, met so brief a while ago, concern it? Somehow her personality had wrought upon him more potently than he had realized until now. He

had accepted an invitation to dine at her home in St. John's Wood that same evening, little dreaming of what was meanwhile destined to occur.

Back again in the office, he sat for some time staring at a pile of letters which Mr. Ogilvie had placed on the desk before him. Why, he kept asking himself, had this Aileen Desmond, loudish in her demeanor, sometimes unfeminine in the pitch and ring of her voice, aggressively handsome, if handsome at all, so penetrated his mind with obstinate souvenirs? . . .

Before long, however, he straightened himself in his odd-feeling editorial chair and began to open, one after another, the letters that Vincent had said he could treat precisely as if addressed to himself. They were mostly tedious reading. Every editor receives, each year, scores of precisely the same trite, imploring, egotistic, pathetic sort. Some enclosed third-rate poems. Others inquired (and not always grammatically) about the fate of delayed manuscripts. Others proposed articles yet unwritten. One scolded the paper for having printed this or that. The next applauded what had just been condemned. Ulric found himself tearing open envelopes almost mechanically and reading their contents with an automatic *ennui*. At last he found himself twenty lines deep in a letter that may have been, all told, about one hundred. Suddenly starting, he gave a rapid turn of its leaf and read the name "Aileen Desmond." Then he took up the envelope, heedlessly unclosed, and found "private" written on a corner of it. He read no more, but, in one sense, he had read quite too much. Miss Desmond had sent a confidential missive to Vincent, which bore upon her private relations with *Candor* and its editor. But there was something else. For a few seconds the little attic office went round with Ulric. *Euphemia Stagge and Aileen Desmond were one! She was perpetuating the dead woman's personality. Non omnis moriar*

might well be inscribed upon the tombstone of Euphemia Stagge, for her popular rubbish lived again in this adroit duplicator.

Ulric had read enough of her letter to apprehend that she was receiving a large monthly sum for her work, and that in consequence of its salable effect on the paper she wished it raised several pounds higher. He recalled what he had so recently heard in his mother's drawing-room with respect to the mystery of Aileen's and Lady Sheila's unexplained income. And Aileen had been willing to stoop like this! She had sold herself so piteously!

He went, that evening, to dine with her, full of disgust and contempt. But, somehow, she had no sooner greeted him than he felt the reassertion of a spell. Lady Sheila, her mother, an elderly repetition of Aileen, gave him warmest welcome. The house was small, yet appointed with much elegance; the repast, in its quality wandered wide of that national bungler, the British cook, and breathed suggestively, in certain courses, of flavorful Parisian skill. There were five other guests present, and three of them bore titles. Ulric soon suspected that, by intention, these five had been selected as people who specially admired his writings. But though every eye, so to speak, was upon him, and his words were evidently waited for as the utterance of a great personage, he could not keep his glance from straying toward Aileen, he could not keep his heart from pounding queerly against his side, he could not keep his tongue from longing to reveal what he had learned and expressing both his regret and dismay with regard to it.

During dinner he had no chance of this, for Aileen was separated from him by three people. But afterward he was first to join the ladies in the drawing-room, and there a low-voiced conversation soon occurred between Lady Sheila's daughter and himself.

He let Aileen murmur on and on for quite a while concerning the

"loveliness" of his books. Then he asked her if she knew about his temporary editorship of *Candor*. With a slight, self-recollecting start, she admitted that she had learned. Almost irresistibly, at this point, Ulric told her of what *he* knew, and of how an error, which he heartily regretted, had brought this knowledge about.

Aileen had quickly crimsoned, and he saw tears, that seemed more wrathful than tender, glittering between her eyelids. Presently she bridled, throwing back her head and biting her nether lip. "Let us go into my study," she said, and rose. A little later they stood together in a small room lined with low book shelves, overhung by plenteous prints.

Her manner had hardened now; her look was full of dry light. "What are you going to do?" she asked, facing him squarely.

"Do?" he repeated, as if dazed.

"Oh, you're *not* going to tell!" she broke out. "I can't conceive of *your* telling." Then she bowed her head and visibly shivered. "But you've despised me, of course. And I do so detest the idea of your contempt! You are such an artist; you must understand the degradation of such paltry, flimsy work; you must look down from such a height on all this Euphemia Stagge inanity!"

"I haven't thought so much of that," said Ulric, in grave tones. "The—pardon me—but the false witness of it has chiefly concerned my attention."

He saw one of her hands knot itself. "The false witness! Yes; you mean the fraud, shame, criminality."

"You call it harsh names."

"And so do you," she sped on, with a new and sudden heat. "It's revolting to you. Why should it not be? Do you know, my own mother hasn't an idea of it. It's all an absolute secret between Vance Vincent and myself." She wheeled away from him, paced the floor, and after a few seconds paused at his side. "Mamma believes that everything comes from my writings—my success here and there with journals and magazines.

She never even reads what I sign in *Candor*. She's terribly old-fashioned about what she reads at all—it's forever Shakespeare and Swift and Jane Austen and Thackeray with her. She hates the modern movement, as she calls it—luckily for me. But the truth would kill her, she's so honorable, so fine fibred, so clean in aim and act."

"She shall not hear the truth from me," Ulric said, softly. "No one shall."

Aileen caught his hand and pressed it. "You'll be perfect—of course! Your books have already told me that!"

"Oh, bother my books," he smiled; but the smile was joyless.

"Don't speak of them with disrespect. I can't bear it, Mr. Tremayne, even from *you*. There are pages in them that make me hate myself for the hideous hypocrite I've become. And yet this tangle can't be unraveled now. It's too late."

"You mean," said Ulric, with a kind of placid swiftness, "that you won't give up—the money?"

"I can't give it up. If it were not for mamma I might."

"You would," he urged, and into his eyes had come unconscious pleadings. "Tell me that you would."

But here the bridling air once more possessed Aileen. Whether bravado or not, it was surely vehement. "I think," she protested, with a nervous quiver about the lips, yet a decisive stiffening of the large, full-moulded throat, "that my course is not so indefensible. The deception injures nobody on earth. It isn't as if Mrs. Cleeve were a writer whose work had the least value. I'm fooling a lot of folk, but not in any harmful way. I'm helping Vance Vincent, too, with my imitative nonsense, just as he's helping me—*us*, I should phrase it—with his amiable cheques. And the dreary stuff isn't a sinecure, either. You've no idea how hard I have to work at it. For three hours every morning I—"

But here she stopped short. His

eyes were relentless. They arraigned her with a glacial reproach.

"I—I see," she faltered, her whole manner changing, a look of plaintive wistfulness having replaced the sharp antagonism just shown. "You can't feel with me. It all strikes you but one way."

"But one way," he echoed. Still, his voice was not severe. He could not even vaguely explain the power she exerted over him; he could only perceive, in a flash of passion, that he had suddenly got to love her, and that his loathing of the duplicity in whose meshes he had found her was intensified from this new and cogent cause.

"You must give it up," he went on. "Let the end of what you are now doing for Vance be the end of all you shall ever do! Promise me!" And he held out his hand.

She looked at it, then recoiled a little, shaking her head. "No, no! I can't go back to the old humdrum, linsey-woolsey life! I can't drag mamma back *there*! Unless you betray me (and I know you won't!) I shall wear the mantle of Euphemia Stagge as long as fate allows. There's no alternative—none!"

Ulric thought of "fate," at this moment, in the person of Joyce Gar-moyle. But he raised no signal of danger. Instead, he answered, with tender violence:

"There is one alternative. I am looking at it now."

"What?" came her swift question.

"You can't guess—I must tell you."

"Tell me—tell me!"

"First, you must promise me that the exhumed Euphemia shall be, once and for all, reburied."

She stared into his face. "I will not," she drew forth, slowly, "and you understand why."

"You must face that 'why,'" he insisted. "You must go back to the old life. Your wounded honor must be nursed there. You must bathe its hurts in your repentant tears. And then—"

"Then you will tell me the alternative," she shot at him, all fierceness

once more. "And if I refuse *then* to accept it?"

"You will have your consolation—your sustainment."

"How? how?"

He looked at her with fixity, sweetness, force. "You will have conquered yourself. You will have set your heel on this snake of a lie, whose toils have been tightening about you month after month."

She flung her head defiantly upward again and laughed the coldest of laughs. "Let us go back, please, into the drawing-room. I find it rather chilly here."

"It is rather too chilly for me as well," said Ulric. "Make my adieux, please, to Lady Sheila. Good-night."

He passed straight out of the room and down stairs into the lower hall, though a voice, unless his buzzing ears counterfeited the sound of one, called after him.

Once in the open air he had the luck soon to find a cab, and was driven to Joyce Garmoyle's favorite club—the Thatched House, in St. James's street, where that gentleman had recently told him he was apt to loiter as late as twelve. Here he found his friend, and here (on the side of Ulric, at least) some very earnest talk ensued. Entreaty was blent with it. But Garmoyle refused to yield.

"You tell me," he said, "that you have found out the culprit. Well, he or she—whichever it is—must suffer the full penalties of exposure."

They talked on. Garmoyle remained inflexible, though always genial and polite.

"Ah!" at length fell from Ulric, in despair, "you're casting a slur, Joyce, upon a woman! She will never, in one sense, recover from it. Her career—for I suppose she may be said to have a career—will end with your denunciation."

Garmoyle's eyes gave out a queer sparkle then. "I knew it was a woman, Ulric, and I suspect who she is."

"No, no," protested Ulric, lifting his hand, "I—"

"But there's one thing that I do

not suspect, my friend—for I am certain of it. You are in love with this woman."

Color surged into Ulric's face. But he made no reply.

Garmoyle steadily watched him. Both men kept silent longer than either guessed. Then Garmoyle said, slowly:

"Am I right when I ask if the new prosperity of Lady Sheila Desmond and her daughter, Miss Aileen, does not depend—?"

"Hush, Joyce! I didn't come here to quarrel with you."

"Quarrel? Absurd! Why shouldn't we do very differently? Why shouldn't we reach, you and I, the friendliest of compacts?"

"Compacts?" It seemed as if Ulric not only spoke the word but stared it. "Listen. I've told you how I admired your mother's ward. Tonight I went to South Kensington—to Rosemary Terrace."

"Well?"

"Miss Rachel was not at home. She'd gone to a concert with Lady Illingsworth."

"Well?"

"Your charming mother *was* at home, however, and, somehow, Miss Rachel became our topic. I—I think that perhaps I betrayed myself."

"Betrayed yourself? How?"

"Thank God that man's gone!" said Garmoyle, glancing over one shoulder at a figure that had just reached a somewhat distant doorway. "The smoking-room is now, for at least a time, deserted. We're alone, and can raise our voices beyond a whisper." He had already raised his voice considerably beyond. "Will you have another cigarette?"

"Thanks, no."

"Betrayed myself?" plunged Garmoyle, his voice for a moment centred, as it were, in a great smoke cloud. "I did more. I told your mother that I loved Rachel, and would give anything to make her my wife."

Ulric did not redden at this; he perceptibly paled. "And—my mother?" he asked.

"Oh, she was very sweet with me in my garrulity, my impetuosity. She merely said that you and Rachel had been engaged for an eternity."

"We have been, I suppose," said Ulric, as if addressing the floor. Then he lifted his eyes and gave his shoulders the faintest of shrugs. When he spoke, which was immediately, his tones were tranquil but very hard.

"I think I see, Garmoyle, what you are driving at. You want me to say, 'Go in and win Rachel,' and if I do say it you'll agree to leave the Euphemia Stagge matter forever unmolested."

"Forever."

When they parted that night the "compact" had been fully clinched. Ulric went to his chambers and hardly got a wink of sleep till dawn. But it was no thought of Rachel that kept him awake. Out of a thousand South African millionaires, each attractive as Joyce Garmoyle, not one could tempt *her* loyalty! But how cravenly had he permitted his own to lapse! Still, he saw now what his love for her had been. How wan it looked beside the crimson of this new sorcery—what "moonlight unto sunlight, what water unto wine!" Of course, Joyce Garmoyle would make her far happier than he. But then, she would turn from this new suitor no less in terror than disgust. He knew her so well, dear, faithful, undeserved Rachel! And yet, if he had not felt so certain of her impregnable fidelity, would he have countenanced this agreement with Garmoyle? Ah, never in life!

Anyway, he had saved Aileen. She would no doubt write him to-morrow, at the office of *Candor*. Anxiety would prompt her to do so, for did he not hold her secret in the palm of his hand? But at Southampton street there was no such letter when he arrived, nor did any come during the day. Toward the afternoon he began to pity her. She must be suffering keenly. Perhaps pride had made her resent as an unpardonable arrogance his hinted "alternative." But, evi-

dently, she trusted him. He felt a flattered pride in this reflection as the lovely London day drew toward its end, and rose and lilac lights came out even in those narrow strips of heaven above the grimy housetops of this trade-haunted purlieu. So many women would have trembled, under like conditions, for the integrity of his word!

Two more days passed, bringing with them duties on the journal that grew hourly more onerous and odious, but still bringing not a sign from Aileen. Ulric's mood had changed by this. He now assured himself that he had behaved with shameful cruelty, and that Miss Desmond had treated him in precisely the proper spirit. On the morning of the fourth day he began to write to her. While he was tearing up his sixth epistle, Vance Vincent burst into the room.

The real editor of *Candor* was in deep mourning. He wrung Ulric's hand and told him that Sir Marmaduke had died quite suddenly on the previous day. But in a burst of antemortem amiability he had summoned his solicitor, altered his will, and made him (Vance) heir to the entire property.

"I've come up to town for only a few hours," the new Sir Vance continued. "A thousand thanks, dear Ulric, for what you must already have done upon the paper. I shall need your services only about two days longer. Then I shall return, and gradually, with as much decorum as the public will consider their due, let it fade from farther existence."

"Have you—?" Ulric stopped for a second. Then he brought bravely out: "Have you seen Miss Desmond?"

"Seen her? Yes! But only for too brief a while!" Vance's face was now a sunbeam. He forgot the propriety of looking solemn, as heir to a fortune and a baronetcy. "Oh, Ulric, I must tell you what I've never told anyone before. Aileen and I have loved each other devotedly for two years. It will soon all come out, but pray don't mention it till we meet

again. We are certain to be married in the Autumn. Dear girl! I can give her, now, not merely the empty title of Lady Vincent, but Deendale and at least twelve thousand pounds a year on which to shine there as its chatelaine. . . . And now I must be off. You see, the funeral is tomorrow, and I have so many things to get through with before I catch the four twenty-eight train."

Abruptly as he had come Vance darted away. Ulric sat for ten minutes perfectly immobile. At last he was aware of a suave voice near one of his elbows.

"Excuse me, sir," said Mr. Ogilvie, with his usual timid yet prodigal courtesy. "Here is the last instalment of Euphemia Stagge's—"

"Damn the last instalment of Euphemia Stagge!" cried Ulric, pale as ashes and almost bounding from his seat. "I'll not read a line of it; I'll not look at another scrap of proof, open another letter! I've done with *Candor* forever." He laughed hollowly to himself while dashing toward his hat and umbrella and seizing them. "Hereafter, if you please, I prefer *concealment*!" With this lame little ironic pun on his lips he sped to the door. He was really thinking aloud, in a half-frantic way, of how he had so lately almost worn his heart on his sleeve before Aileen. But while descending the long spiral staircase into the street a remorseful pang smote him. Poor Ogilvie had looked so terribly shocked, yet still so indestructibly courteous.

At his rooms, a short time afterward, he found an urgent note from his mother. Where had he been hiding himself? She greatly wished to see him, and at once. Could he not come in for tea by about five that same day? Rachel was going to the private opening of the Royal Academy, so they would be quite alone.

Rachel!

As he read this name Ulric's eyes flooded with tears. Ah, life had its consolations yet. In a little while the new infatuation would dwindle before the old, sweet, constant, inalienable love!

His mother had been shocked, of course, by Joyce Garmoyle's proposal, for Rachel had doubtless told her of it with surprise and regret. And she meant to rally him on his neglect; she meant to lecture him on it, in her wise, unwounding way. He would hear every word (why not?) in a spirit submissive and contrite.

But no such receptivity as he the stars in their courses had arranged was required of him. To his growing bewilderment, Mrs. Tremayne, seated among her porcelain teacups and her Indian rugs, entered upon a revelation about as much anticipated by its listener as the collapse of Waterloo Bridge.

"Good God, mother!" he at length said, chokedly, "this can't be true!"

"Why, *dear* Ulric," rippled Mrs. Tremayne, "have you taken it so to heart? I didn't suppose you would care very much. I'm sure that Rachel didn't. And then, you know, when I last advised you to make public your engagement to our sweet Rachel, you . . . Well, my son, you rather rebuffed me; yes, you may not have meant it, but you really did. And then, too, Ulric, *every* girl needs a certain amount of love-making. Poor Rachel adored you; after a fashion, my son, she adores you still—after a *sisterly* fashion, that is, and with positive reverence for your talents. But then, Joyce Garmoyle is very much in love, and since he is also very attractive, how has Rachel been able to *help* responding? Moreover, I can't—I feel that I *ought* not, shut my eyes to . . ."

Ulric rose, nearly upsetting a big vase of double narcissi on a little table near him. "Certainly, mother; you couldn't forget that Joyce has six times more money than myself, if not ten."

"Ulric! What a way to put it! You'll wait, won't you, till they come back from the Academy?"

"*They!*" he repeated, below his breath. And then: "I think, mother, that I shall go home. This playing at editor (of which I told you) has tired me."

"Ah, you call those bachelor chambers 'home!' "

"No." He went up to her chair and took her hand. "I mean the old family home at Putney, which I've always felt to be mine as much as yours."

"You're going *there*, Ulric, at the height of the season?"

"Bother the height of the season, mumsey! Will you come and make me a week-end visit now and then? I'll read you the first chapters before long—who knows?—of my much delayed 'Beldolcio.' "

"'Beldolcio!' How I shall love to

listen!" But here Mrs. Tremayne lifted an admonishing finger. "Still, I shall be a stern critic; I shall want it to surpass the other two."

"Oh, it will, I think," Ulric seemed to muse aloud. "I've been learning more of life, lately. Yes, it ought to be better."

When "Beldolcio" was written the world so pronounced it. This was a general verdict. But a minor one, delivered rather by Ulric's literary lovers than his admirers, ran thus:

"He has been learning more of life, it is true. But has not the lesson proved too bitter?"



LOVE'S DECREE

SIR, I find, at the start,
You have stolen the maiden's heart—
Property which, from a legal point of view,
Does not belong to you.
Having thoroughly weighed
The case of the maid—
From what I see,
Thus do I decree:

- WHEREAS: The maiden's face
Spurred you on apace;
And every look her own
Bewitching shone;
WHEREAS: She did not argue nay
When you came day by day,
And seeing her heart's delight
You persisted (perfectly right!),
WHEREAS: You did not spread deceit
Before her feet,
But were drawn soul to soul
By a power beyond control;
WHEREAS: You were not alone
In taking what (just now) is not your own;
WHEREAS: I was the thief, in part,
Who stole the maiden's heart;
Therefore do I, Love, given the power to arbitrate,
Decide your fate;
RESOLVED: The maid, you and I form an alliance,
And bid the world defiance!

MONTROSE J. MOSES.

THE RING OR THE DAGGER?

[In Scotland, in the year 1347, Lady Margaret, the heiress of Seton, was forcibly abducted by a neighboring baron named Alan de Winton. "That yhere," says Andrew Wyntoun, in his "Orygynale Cronykil of Scotland," "Alene de Wyntoun tuk the yhoung Lady Setoun and weddit hyr than till hys wyf." This outrage caused a bloody contest in Lothian, and a hundred ploughs were left in the furrow. When Margaret was rescued and Alan confronted with the Seton family, the lady was provided with a ring and a dagger, with permission to give her abductor either love or death.]

THE Lady Seton, so young and gracious,
Gentle, vivacious and debonair,
By a bold De Winton is seized and carried
Away unmarried, and all's despair.

Yet no! "A Seton!" the clansmen crying,
From far replying, to vengeance leap.
Beneath the Dragon* they band together,
Scour hill and heather, *sans* rest or sleep.

De Winton, captured, with chains is laden,
The trembling maiden is torn away;
Whilst he, confronted, in calm derision
Awaits decision, transpire what may.

They hand the bride, as she ponders sadly,
A dagger deadly, a ring of gold;
"Give him love or death, and your choice of metal
His doom shall settle," she has been told.

How shall she judge him? A heart so tender,
And hands so slender, to balance fate!
Her fierce pursuer, her outlaw wooer,
How stands he to her—for love or hate?

She pales, she blushes. He waits, all braving,
No mercy craving of clan or King.
Ah, Margaret! canst thou no longer linger?
On her lover's finger she slips the ring.

HENRY TYRRELL.

* Crest of the Setons.



AN IDEAL FIGURE

MISS THINLY—I think I shall become an artist's model.
HER FRIEND—Well, you might pose successfully as the "Skeleton in Armor."

A PROPOSAL BY STRATEGY

By R. Leroy Thompson

SMITH was leaning thoughtfully against the mantel and industriously endeavoring to send a small ring of smoke through a previously blown larger ring. This exercise was a certain custom of Smith's whenever he had any especially difficult thinking to do.

Billy Steward, who had dropped in for his usual after-dinner smoke, knew this, and consequently refrained from any form of greeting on entering, but lighted his pipe and settled himself in an easy attitude on the couch with a late magazine for amusement, and waited. He knew he would soon be called on to pass judgment on something or other, for Smith always asked his advice on every subject, from the purchasing of a new pipe to the proper thing to wear to an afternoon reception. Smith was as hopeless on matters of form as he was on everything else, and Billy was kind enough to help him out of his numerous tangles by well-timed suggestions.

"I say, Billy," he began—he had at last succeeded in getting the ring through successfully, and that was always his signal for beginning—"I'm a blasted idiot."

Steward didn't consider the remark worthy of comment, and continued his reading.

"If I hadn't gone to that confounded party of the Hopkinses," Smith went on, lucidly, "I wouldn't have met her."

Steward kept on reading.

Smith knocked the ashes out of his pipe and filled it again. "Billy," he said, "I want to ask you candidly if I haven't got a rather comfortable place here?"

Steward glanced at the old familiar walls, with their bizarre decorations, the mantels covered with pipes, the golf clubs reposing in the corner, the photographs and magazines strewn carelessly about the room, the centre table covered with bottles, the bull terrier quietly sleeping on Smith's best silk sofa pillow, and nodded his head.

"And a fellow can do pretty much as he likes, can't he?"

Billy replied from the depths of the magazine that he surely could.

"And there would be no need of a fellow throwing it all up after he got his M.D., would there? He could just add an office-room on front and live about the same as usual, couldn't he—if he was single?"

"I don't see why he couldn't," said Steward, not letting Smith's remarks in any way interfere with his absorption in the article he was reading.

"Then," said Smith, slowly, "why the devil is it that I want to get married?"

Steward threw down the magazine and quickly assumed a sitting posture.

"Now see here, old man, you haven't been foolish enough to go to falling in love with anyone, have you—and especially without consulting me?"

"I don't really know," Smith replied, ignoring the latter part of the question. "You see, I haven't known her very long, but I haven't been able to sleep any since I have known her, so I suppose it's serious."

Steward laughed. "Well, then, why don't you marry her?"

Smith pulled soberly at his pipe—he was taking Billy in all seriousness. "Well, that's what I'm bothering my head about. You see, I've lived this

sort of life so long—" he waved his hand toward his pile of pipes, the centre table and the general bachelor disarrangement—"that I never could break away from it. What if she should want to clean things up? What if she objected to the club and had feelings against smoking in the dining-room? What if she didn't like bulldogs and you fellows?" (Smith was unconscious of striking contrasts in his summary.) "You know I couldn't get along unless I had all of these things."

"I see," said Billy, "it's the same old question:

"Which is the better portion, bondage bought with a ring,
Or a harem of dusky beauties, fifty tied in a string?"

"And another thing," said Smith, "I couldn't bluff her off on these things the way you fellows could if you were going to be married. She would get on to me right off if I tried anything of that sort."

"There's no doubt about that," said Steward, casting a glance at Smith's innocent countenance. "But see here, now—" he began to look serious—"I don't know but what your idea deserves consideration. I should hate awfully to lose you, Smith, but, now I come to think of it, we've got to part soon, anyway; our schooldays are nearly at an end, and you really ought to have someone to take care of you. I don't know where I'll be after we graduate. I may be getting married myself." He took a small miniature from his pocket and gazed at the face smilingly as he spoke. "If this girl you're losing your sleep over is a sensible girl—and you don't want her unless she is—she'll have you as you are—and your friends, too. Perhaps she would like you better that way; girls are not all prudes nowadays. Why don't you be a man and state things to her as they are? Then, if she wants you, all right; if she doesn't—well—

"A woman is only a woman.

But a good cigar is a smoke;"

and Steward, content with his sage advice, put the miniature back in his

pocket, picked up one of Smith's Havanas, and lighted it carefully.

"I couldn't ever do it," said Smith, helplessly. "I'd make such a terrible mess of it that she wouldn't have me, anyway."

"Then," said Steward, "I'll have to fix up a plan for you. You're sure you're set on this thing?"

"Well, I can't go on losing my sleep," replied Smith. "I've tried Q. and X. tablets, so I know it isn't my stomach, and I guess I'd feel better on the whole if it were settled."

Steward scratched his chin contemplatively for a few moments, then slapped his leg in excess of satisfaction.

"I've got it!" he cried.

"So soon?" asked Smith. "I wish I could do things like that."

"See here," said Steward; "suppose you write a letter to somebody—an old chum out in California or New Mexico, or anywhere you want to."

Smith looked at him in astonishment.

"Tell him you are thinking seriously of getting married—splendid girl, and all that sort of thing—"

"But what—?"

"Hold on, Smith, I'm not through yet. Tell this fellow you are so unworthy you don't dare to ask her to have you. Rehearse all your bad habits."

"But I say, I—"

"Shut up till I finish. Say you couldn't give these things up even for the girl you loved, and ask him if he thinks she will have you as you are."

"But, Billy, I don't know anyone in New Mexico, and you're—"

"Will you keep quiet until I finish? Now, you write her a note, this girl. Say you're going to call down to get her to drive with you."

"That will be nice. I'll—"

"Won't you please pay attention? I'm coming to the point. You put the notes in the *wrong envelopes*, of course. She'll get the first one and your Western friend will get the invitation to drive. There really is no need of the latter, but it's just as well to have it, as he will probably return

it to you, and you'll have it to show later on in proof of your mistake. Are you beginning to understand?"

Smith looked rather blank, but Steward went on, enthusiastically:

"Natural curiosity will compel her to read your letter, though she sees it's meant for someone else. Then you call around for the drive. *She* is surprised to see you, and *you* are surprised at her not receiving your note. But she goes driving with you, just the same, and if she does not give you a tip by her conduct what to say—well, then, there'll be no hope for you. Do you catch the point."

"Oh, yes," said Smith, "I write to her, only I write to someone else."

"No," said Steward; "you write to *someone else*, only you write to *her*. It's very simple."

"Oh, yes, it's very simple," said Smith; "only I guess you'd better write the letter for me."

"All right," said Steward; "or, rather, I'll dictate it. You'll have to do the writing."

Smith got out his stationery and seated himself at the desk, while Billy stood behind him.

"Let's see whom we'll write it to. Oh, there's Herb Johnson, who graduated last year and settled out in Arizona. So here goes: 'My dear Herbert: I hope you will forgive me for not answering your letter sooner.' (That will make it strong, you know—she'll think he's a regular correspondent.) 'Perhaps I should have been still more delinquent in my reply did I not feel as if I must unburden myself to someone and ask his advice.' (That's to make her think you have had her in your mind for a long time.) 'Herbert, I want to get married, only I can't pluck up the courage to ask the girl I love to have me. I am in love—in love with the most charming girl you could imagine.' (That ought to make some impression.) 'But what worries me is the fact that I think I am unworthy of her.' (They always like to have men say they are unworthy, you know.) 'I am too confirmed in my habits to ever

be able to give them up, and should I ask a woman I love to bear with them?—my pipe, my bulldog, my general disarrangement, and also my failing for an occasional bottle of beer and a game of poker?' (I think that will practically cover everything.) 'Should I rather not stick to bachelorhood, though the thoughts of living without her will probably drag me down even deeper than I am now?' (Always remember the saving grace.) 'Now, old man, advise me what to do, for old time's sake, and win the everlasting friendship of your old school-mate, SMITH.'"

Smith blotted it carefully, and Steward picked it up and read it with an air of satisfaction.

"I think that will fetch her," he said, "if she is really the one you want."

"I hope so," said Smith. "Now, I'll just send this to Herbert, and he'll tell me what to do."

Steward nearly fell over backward at Smith's impenetrability.

"No, no, no! You send it to *her*, don't you see? She is to think you *meant* it for Herbert."

A sudden light dawned on Smith, and he blew out a big succession of rings with great rapidity. "That's great, old man! What a head you have!"

"I think it will be all right," Steward answered; "but I must be going. By the way, I am going to run out to Fitchburg to-morrow for a few days to look into a practice that's for sale. I'll drop around as soon as I get back, and I hope you'll have everything fixed up by that time. Good-night, old man, and don't forget to mail the letter."

Three days passed before Steward returned.

When he came in Smith was standing by the mantel in his accustomed position, engaged in his ephemeral gymnastics.

"Well," said Steward, gaily, as they shook hands, "am I to congratulate you?" For answer Smith took a small, delicately scented note from

his inside pocket and handed it to Billy.

"It was addressed to me," he said, "but it says 'Dear Laura' inside. I was going to send it right back as soon as I opened it, but I happened to think she might have done the same thing that I did, so I saved it for you."

"Marvelous!" said Steward. "Smith, old man, you're getting to be a regular conspirator."

Steward slightly gasped as his eyes fell on the superscription, but he pulled out the enclosed note and read:

MY DEAR LAURA:

I hope you will excuse my scribbling so, but I have only a moment. I am just writing to Mr. Smith to ask him over to dinner next Friday, and I want you to come, too.

Mr. Smith is one of the dearest men I know, so true-hearted and honest, and just the sort of a man you have always been longing for. You know you have told me you would never marry, because it wouldn't seem a bit like home to have things new and straitlaced after you

had lived with your big brothers so long and lighted their pipes for them and played golf with them and had their cluttered room to take comfort in. Now, Mr. Smith is the kind of a man who would make a home for you just as your big brothers would make, and I hope you will fall in love with him and he with you. So don't fail to come.

BESSIE.

P.S.—I think it will be a good opportunity for me to announce my engagement to Mr. Steward. We have kept it secret long enough. Of course, he will be there.

B.

It was impossible to describe the expression on Billy's face as he looked up at Smith when he had finished.

"For heaven's sake, old man, why didn't you tell me who the girl was, in the first place?"

"Well," said Smith—he had just succeeded in putting through the small ring again—"it would have saved a lot of trouble, wouldn't it? But it's all right, anyway. I think I'll marry Laura."



MOCKERY

HE gave her a lily bell
When her heart was all aflame
With a passion she might not tell
And a hope she dared not name.

He gave her a lily flower
In its passionless repose,
To mock her darkest hour,
For her rival wore his rose.

DANSKE DANDRIDGE.

NOT OBTAINABLE

STUDENT—The hair of our heads, even, are all numbered.
BALDHEAD—Well, then, I'd like to secure a few back numbers.

THE WAY FROM HALIFAX

By Katharine Hughes

ISABEL was bored. The ship, half freighter, half passenger, had small deck room, and forced a neighborliness of person that was not palliated by neighborliness of feeling. Isabel looked furtively over the top of her book at her fellow-passengers, and had no difficulty in deciding they were impossible.

A meek maiden from New Jersey, with her still meeker mother, was taking the voyage to escape hay fever. Isabel was not interested in chronics.

Three married couples, rolled in rugs, were stretched out side by side in their steamer chairs, looking as stupid and connubial as possible. A little devil of mirth danced up and down in Isabel's luminous eyes as she thought how she should enjoy seeing them all suddenly rolled off into the sea and roused into something resembling action.

A man with a strong jaw and thick, dark hair showing threads of gray, returned her gaze, unexpectedly and coldly. He had shipped at Halifax that morning. Isabel was amused to read in his eyes that he cared little for women. She could appreciate that indifference.

"Probably he has been bored to death by one of them, and thinks all are alike. He looks positively hostile, though because of experience rather than by nature." It was a mere impression, flitting almost unconsciously through a mind accustomed to analyze people at a glance.

The heavy blond man caught Isabel's eye and started suddenly as if to join her. She frowned hastily and plunged into her book. She hated him unspeakably. He was a New

York journalist. He ought to have been interesting, and he was a deadly bore. She could not forgive him. In her wrath she turned her back on him, struggling with her rug.

"Let me help you." She was surprised and somehow relieved to find it was the cold-eyed stranger, and that he was wrapping her deftly.

"I am sorry to tax you." Isabel's voice was not the least of her charms, and she was by no means ignorant of the fact.

"It is not a tax; it is a pleasure." She smiled up at him for the little conventional speech, and his answering smile revealed white, even teeth that satisfied her. She placed strangers in the social scale by their teeth.

"You are interested in hunting, aren't you?" she asked, settling back in her chair and making conversation with him as he leaned against the rail, gravely regarding her.

"How do you know?" Her directness evidently surprised him.

"I heard you talking to the Captain at luncheon." The subtle flattery of her interest stirred him.

"Yes, I hunt a little." He looked it—muscular, square, firm, steady of eye and hand.

"Going to Newfoundland for a caribou?"

"I hope to get one."

"You will."

"Thank you," with a slight smile.

"Why do you think so?"

"You will get anything you wish to have."

"Is that astrology?"

Isabel laughed. "No, nothing occult. But I know the marks of the man who succeeds."

"And the woman?"

"Women always succeed."

He raised his steamer cap with a little bow and a smile half gallant, half ironical, and wholly appreciative. His smile had an effect of being reluctant, and Isabel found herself liking to compel it.

"Do you hunt?" he asked in turn.

"Sometimes." Mischief sparkled in Isabel's eyes.

"I mean—I mean—" He almost flushed.

"No, I am not a modern Diana," she answered, becoming serious to meet his less agile mind. "The only game a woman is ever deeply interested in is the game of life. But I am fond of the woods and fields, of camp life and of roughing it. I appreciate your taste for that sort of thing."

"Women seldom do. Mrs. Amory does not care in the least for outdoor life."

"Name, Amory," thought Isabel. "Mrs. Amory evidently the wife. Also evidently not congenial. Probably explains the bored look." But that did not specially interest her. It was too old a story to a New York woman, most of all to Isabel Everingham.

"I love this, too," she said, indicating the fog that was settling thick and heavy around them.

"Better than the Captain does, I fancy." The Captain was pacing the bridge uneasily.

"I suppose so. This is what I came out 'for to see'—a typical fog off the Newfoundland Banks. Is it dangerous?"

"A little." Isabel's eyes brightened and her burned cheeks flushed more deeply.

"Isn't it weird and mysterious? Don't you feel as if you were on a phantom ship and were a ghost yourself?"

He shook his head negatively, smiling down on her enthusiasm.

"I'm too—too solid."

"A Norseman of old or a Viking sailing unknown seas. You must be something, you know. You can't be

just an ordinary, everyday person, with this wonderful cloud shutting you off from the rest of the world." She looked at him with big, serious eyes, like a child wanting to play at fairy-tales. Suddenly the fog lifted a little.

"Look! There is Cape Race," Amory said, pointing to leeward. Isabel leaned forward eagerly. Only the foot of the promontory could be seen, the waves dashing themselves into white foam on its rocks; and out of the thick mist above the ship sounded the deep, warning bellow of the signal horn, like the voice of a huge ghost, roaring in loneliness.

"There!" whispered Isabel, in a hushed voice of awe; "didn't I tell you there were ghosts?" She had risen, breathless and delighted, utterly unconscious that she was clinging to a stranger's arm. Amory did not move or answer, but his brown eyes rested on her face with a new light dawning in them.

"And, oh, look! look!" cried Isabel, half turning him around in her excitement. "A fishing fleet! And see the dories!"

He did not obey her. His eyes had other employment. The dories drifted slowly through the mist, some of them dangerously close to the ship, while farther out the fishing smacks could be faintly seen, tossing at anchor. Suddenly Isabel became conscious of the intent gaze of the dark eyes above her; of her hold on this man's arm; of her utter lapse from conventionality. She let herself realize it all for a moment and then faced it, like the woman of the world she was. Raising her eyes she looked directly into his.

"The sea turns my head," she said, softly. He made no attempt to change his mental attitude; not because he was a man of the world, but because he was simply a man, without subtleties and unaccustomed to emotions. He only looked at her, awaiting her movements. From under her lashes her glance swept the deck, and she saw they were alone except for the Captain at his post and an occasional deck-hand working around the ship.

"I think everyone must have gone down to dinner. Did the gong sound?" She had withdrawn her hand from his arm and was gathering her wraps around her.

"I don't know."

In spite of herself Isabel laughed. She knew why she had not heard the call to dinner, and she thought she also knew why he had not. But their reasons were different.

"Shall we go down?"

He seemed not quite to understand her facile changes of manner, but gravely helped her down the companionway.

It was nearly midnight when Isabel, muffled in wraps, slipped softly out of her stateroom and stole up on deck, hoping to see the ship make the sometimes dangerous entrance through the narrow gateway of the harbor of St. John's. To her surprise, she found nearly every other passenger ahead of her. She looked carefully from under the shelter of her steamer hood to avoid the journalist. He had not observed her and she escaped to a nook most remote from him where she could yet see the coast line. The night was moonless, clear, quiet. Overhead the coldly brilliant stars glittered on the ship's pathway, and off to the north the aurora borealis flung faint golden and rose flames against the blackness of the sky. Isabel leaned on a lifeboat and breathed deeply. The air was like wine, and her nerves responded to it. As she pushed her hood slightly back from her face she saw Amory slowly pacing the deck. He discovered her, came deliberately toward her, and lifted his cap.

"I did not know you were here, Mrs. Everingham." Isabel smiled under cover of the darkness at his naïve revelation that he had, within the past few hours, ascertained her name.

"I just came up."

"They are sure to make the entrance easily to-night, the sea is so still. In rough weather they often dare not attempt it."

"Are you fond of the sea?" asked Isabel.

"Very."

"Do you live near it?"

"No; my home is in Detroit. We have only the 'unsalted sea.'"

"It is just as beautiful, but seems less mysterious and intoxicating. Perhaps that is all imagination, but I like to cherish it."

"Yes. Cling to your fancies. We need all we have in these drearily commercial, commonplace days."

"Are you crushed under the iron wheel of commerce?"

"Not directly. I am a lawyer when I work, but of course I am pinched by it sometimes, and I always hear it grinding except when I am on the sea or in the woods."

"Is that frequently?"

"As frequently as possible. I try to spend half my year in search of and in new hunting grounds."

"Evidently likes to escape from home as often as possible," thought Isabel; aloud, she said:

"You must know this country thoroughly?"

"Yes; and Europe. Asia and Africa are yet to come."

Isabel studied him with interest, by the starlight. She liked his slow, quiet way and his reach for the whole world.

"Shall I get you a chair?" he asked.

"No, thank you; I like to stand. I feel more free. But don't let me keep you standing."

He put her protest aside with a motion of his hand and pointed toward the land. The rock-bound coast loomed close to them. The other passengers were watching it from various points of vantage and talking in low tones. Higher and higher the huge piles of granite towered above the ship. Isabel felt like stretching up her arms to them.

"I should like to be a bird, to fly and fly, and perch on the topmost peak." Her voice had a low, thrilling ring.

"I'm glad you're not."

She turned toward him imperiously.

"Would you restrict my freedom?" Would this stranger, too, assail the

one fierce longing of her heart, stifled by conventionalities that she hated?

"Not if I could share it."

Isabel caught her breath softly, and for an instant there was silence between them. She did not raise her eyes, but she was conscious that his look did not leave her face.

"Is that the harbor?" she asked, pointing to a break in the highest wall, above which gleamed, on either side, the friendly lights of Her Majesty's signal station.

"Yes." Amory's voice was slightly unsteady.

"But we are passing it."

"They sail beyond and swing back, in order to make the channel."

"It is magnificent."

He was not watching it. Slowly the ship was brought around and slowly she sailed between the giant walls. Isabel threw back her head and gazed up at them through the velvet darkness.

"See the stars between." Her voice was almost a whisper. The witchery of the night was in her veins. In her joy of it she drew herself up and turned toward Amory with a swaying of her slender form that affected him like a touch. Through all the chill of the northern night he could feel the fragrant warmth of her, and for an instant a wild delight of fire flashed through him. Then he remembered her sudden cool changes of manner, and with an effort he held himself in hand.

The ship was at her wharf.

The next morning Isabel took the customary drive to the signal station. A slight mist clung to the hills, wrapping them in blue and purple softness. Below, a hundred greens and golds mellowed back from the tiny farms and gardens, and small lakes gleamed dull silver in the gray light, while out to sea the fog hung heavily, shutting the island in a world of its own, and, far down below, the boats plying back and forth in the harbor looked like toy ships.

Isabel steeped herself in the joy of solitude, which she loved, the driver wondering at the strange taste of the

American woman, but unconcerned because paid by the hour. The strong northern air sent fierce thrills through Isabel's veins.

"No wonder the men of this island do deeds and are brave to recklessness," she mused. "There is something in this atmosphere that tears the soul loose from its trammels."

From her point of vantage she studied the bowl-like valley spread out below and promised herself a long tramp that afternoon past the little white houses to the pine-covered hills beyond.

After luncheon she started to redeem her promise, climbing up through narrow streets, of which none ever, by any chance, kept the same name for more than a block; smiling down on shy, beautiful, dirty, sweet-eyed children who swarmed along her way and smiled back at her; strolling softly through the quiet aisles of the great cathedral, that sat enthroned magnificently above the town; and at last finding herself alone on a winding country road that led, she knew not how, to the hills.

"Prospecting, Mrs. Everingham?"

Isabel sprang to her feet from a shelving pile of tiny, many-colored rocks, on which she had perched to hunt, like a child, for the "prettiest piece."

"Mr. Amory!"

She made no attempt to conceal her surprise, and the slight flash in her eyes could not be regarded as a beacon light of welcome. It drew the color to Amory's face, but his eyes did not falter.

"Please forgive me for overtaking you." The admission of his deliberate purpose disarmed Isabel.

"I have done the town thoroughly, and the hills tempted me. Must I go back?"

"The hills are not mine."

This sounded so ungracious that Isabel weakly softened it with a smile. Amory took full advantage of it.

"Be merciful! Would you condemn a man for doing what you yourself would do if you were a man?"

Isabel laughed. The breeze was

sweeping her annoyance away. Why should she hug conventionalities when her wild desire to escape from them, for a time at least, had driven her to this unfrequented northern shore?

"Come, then. Let's play we are children; dirty children; little vagabonds, to whom conventionality is not even a name. Help me off these rocks." She gave him her hand, gaily, and he released it the instant her feet were once again on solid ground and they were starting along the road.

"I thought you had gone for your caribou."

Amory's eyes lit at her admission that she had thought of him at all.

"There is time enough for that."

"An American who has time enough for anything is rare."

"I fear I am a loafer, and I know I am not ambitious. Perhaps I am too easily satisfied."

"Teach me how to be satisfied. Content is not indigenous to New York."

"In order to give you lessons with true pedagogic regularity it would be necessary that I, also, should live in New York, and that might be fatal to my peace of mind."

"It is entirely possible to loaf in New York." Isabel did not know whether her reply was relevant. She only knew she must say something quickly, and she talked at random, refusing to be responsible.

"Should we be friends there?"

He would have none of her subtleties or evasions. The question was so sudden it disconcerted Isabel. She had been living only in the hour, with a happy unconcern as to the future of her shipboard acquaintance. Her mental glance swept swiftly over the familiar Gotham scenes—the old home on Clinton Place, into which she had married because her family and Percy's had so decreed; the respectable treasures of art and bric-à-brac that formed the background of her daily life; the eminently aristocratic and deadly dull circle of acquaintances; the long monotony of functions, at which she met again and again the same stupid people, on

whom she blandly smiled, as became the spouse of a man swathed in conventionality as a mummy in its wrappings; and she tried to see Ralph Amory in the picture. For an instant it was vain. Then, "Why not?" He had every requisite of poise, education, breeding, wealth. He would not only fit into the life, he would dominate. She had seen those Western men walk with calm unconcern and serene power into the sacred precincts and take possession before a cry of alarm could be raised. She felt a sudden thrill of pride in him, as if he were already her friend and had already conquered; but she only said, "Why not?" It seemed to satisfy him.

"Don't you love the freshness of this breeze and the indescribable something in it that makes for wildness?" Isabel wanted to prattle, like a child, and to take no thought for the morrow.

Amory nodded, looking down at her wind-tossed hair and the swirl of her draperies around her slim figure. Isabel caught the look.

"I know my hat isn't on straight. I am sure I look perfectly rakish, but how can I help it in this wind?"

"Don't try. We are vagabonds. Hats are not vital."

"What is?"

Amory looked steadily at her, then off toward the hills before he answered:

"Freedom."

Isabel turned toward him with a deepening and widening of her eyes that seemed to let fall a veil.

"No, not vital; only among 'things hoped for,' but never to be realized. Who of us has it?—yet we live!" Her red lips curled with a smile that was wholly bitter, as her mental ear caught the clash of chains that only drew the tighter when her pulse leaped at the thought of freedom.

"We do not live; we endure. One hour of freedom would be worth it all."

"The hour is ours. Who may be free, if not vagabonds?"

The blood surged through Amory's

veins in swift response to her mood, but his only answer was in his eyes.

"We must return," said Isabel, hastily. "The sun will soon be behind the hills. We cannot climb them to-day." They had reached the foot of the hills, where the road became a narrow path, and Isabel paused to breathe in the fragrance of the tangled shrubs and vines into which it was leading.

"I want one of each," she said, imperiously, breaking off a cluster of scarlet berries and fastening it in her bodice.

"You are ambitious." He handed her a spray of golden-rod.

"Can you get me the iris?" A solitary blue fleur-de-lis waved softly among its rushes at the edge of a tiny brook just below them. Amory reached for it and watched her secure it deftly on her gown, noting that the eyes above it were not less deep in color and that the wind had burned her cheeks to a rivalry with the berries. He told her so. Isabel laughed.

"I must look like a milk-maid. Get me a fern leaf to tone down the glare."

He did not move. The sun toppled gently over the crest of the hills and seemed to fall suddenly down behind them, so quickly did a soft, damp

shade follow where the light had been.

"Hurry!" urged Isabel; and stepped forward to obey her own command. Her foot slipped on a treacherous pebble; she grasped helplessly at the air.

And Amory caught her in his arms.

For an instant she lay there, her cheek against his own. The fragrance of her hair swept across his nerves like a fire, and he was conscious, even through the wild beating of his heart, that she made no effort to escape. Then she freed herself with a swift, supple strength.

"How awkward of me! But I must have that fern." She was trying to escape from herself.

"Mrs. Everingham—wait—I will get you the fern. I—" He looked at her desperately for an instant; then caught her again in his arms and forced her to meet his eyes.

"Mrs. Everingham, I am going to New York to live. May I?"

Isabel did not answer, but every curve of her softly rounded body seemed to yield to his embrace. His eyes burned into hers and the fierce beating of his heart shook him.

"Tell me; may I?"

Her scarlet lips parted softly as Amory bent above them.

"Yes."



A MATTER OF CUSTOM

"I CAN'T see the justice," said Tooler, "in condemning the Mormons for driving their wives four-in-hand because we prefer to hitch ours tandem."



UNNATURALLY LARGE

"YES, sir," said the actress, haughtily, "that is my figure—one thousand dollars per week."

"Um—er—don't you think," responded the manager, thoughtfully, "your figure is—er—a little bit padded?"

THE SECRET OF ST. JAMES'S PALACE

AN HISTORIC MYSTERY

By Allen Upward

THERE are dim and mouldering parchments inscribed with the crabbed characters of bygone generations, wherein are preserved the underground history of kingdoms, the immemorial records of crime. And among them are to be found tragedies more thrilling than those of the boards and tales more dreadful than any writer of romances has dared to invent.

Searching through these monumental archives, covered with the thick dust of ages, there gleams out here and there upon the eye of the explorer the virgin ore of romance, the rich but ghastly treasure-trove of time. Here wait to be discovered, analyzed, dissected, mysterious problems that have never been solved. Here are narratives of strange crimes perpetrated secretly and never brought to light, of interminable trials of suspected persons whose guilt was never proved, of the administration of barbarous tortures in thick-walled dungeons, of confessions dragged from the blackened lips of sufferers agonizing on the rack, or whispered at midnight to hooded priest or cowed inquisitor in the depths of fearful oubliettes. Here are the terrific secrets of the Bastille, the gloomy histories of the Tower, the sentences of the Vehmgericht, the awful annals of the Holy Office. In these grim chronicles there are words that seem to burn the parchment; the long-dead passions seem yet to palpitate with life, as if they would burst through their dusty cerements.

These are the materials from which

men have drawn the memorable lesson of the fallibility of earthly justice.

There is a dark tradition that clings to the sullen walls of a certain quarter of the old Palace of St. James, and even yet forms the burden of secret whispers among those hereditary retainers whose lives have been lived within the shadow of the royal pile. The subject of this tradition is a shocking and most mysterious event that took place actually within the lifetime of more than one person who may still from time to time pass beneath that battlemented gateway at the corner of Pall Mall, to go through which, from the busy modern streets around it, is like stepping into another century.

But though the date of the crime is thus recent, all memory of it has been carefully obliterated. The voice of public rumor has long ago been stifled. Courtly historians have passed over the event in silence, or with few and closely guarded hints. And the only documents from which light can now be thrown upon the transaction are sealed up in the innermost archives of one of the great offices of State.

Thus it comes to pass that of all those whose daily business takes them to and fro beneath those ancient walls, scarcely one is any longer aware that they were once the witnesses of the tragedy that has now to be recalled.

The date of the tragedy was the night following on the 30th of May, in the year 1810. The scene was in

the apartments of Ernest, Duke of Cumberland, one of the younger sons of George III., who at this time occupied a residence in St. James's Palace.

On the day that preceded this fatal night the Duke of Cumberland had been to a dinner at Greenwich. Afterward, in the evening, he was present at a concert, and finally returned to his residence about midnight. The quarter of the Palace that he occupied was really a distinct house, having its own entrance out of one of the Palace courts. Having come home, the Duke announced his intention of retiring to rest, and ascended the main staircase to his bedroom on the first floor.

In order to reach his bedroom the Duke had first to pass through a small ante-room, the door of which faced the head of the staircase, while another door toward the right gave admission to one of a suite of rooms known as the State apartments, which stretched away in ghostly silence and darkness along the entire length of the floor. The little ante-room that formed the approach to the Duke's bedroom had also a small door—to the left. This was the door of a lesser bedroom for the use of a page or valet in immediate attendance on the Duke. At this time it was occupied by a man named Neale.

The Duke's bedroom also had other doors besides the one leading out into the ante-room. One of these doors gave access to an inner room on the left, containing a small closet, in which bolsters and similar articles were kept. The importance of this closet will appear afterward. Another door on the right of a person entering the Duke's room communicated directly with the series of State apartments, in which the bedroom thus formed the last link. The bed in which the Duke slept stood with its head toward the door into the ante-room.

But there was yet another room on this floor, a room round which a dreadful interest was presently to centre. This was also a bedroom, assigned to the use of a valet in at-

tendance on the Duke from time to time, whose name was Sellis. It was approached by a corridor that turned off on the *left* from the head of the staircase and ran back on a line parallel with that of the State rooms. But though this corridor was the most easy and natural means of approach to Sellis's room, which formed its terminus, there was also another and more roundabout way of reaching the same room. This was by passing through the entire length of State apartments into a passage at the opposite end to the Duke's bedroom. This passage ended in a door leading into Sellis's room, the circuit of the first floor being thus completed.

It will be seen that this floor formed a sort of square, or rather a hollow rectangle, having the well of the staircase in the centre. At one corner of this rectangle was the Duke's bedroom, at the other Sellis's, the two being connected round one side by the ante-room and corridor and round the other by the State apartments and the passage.

No other persons slept on that floor on that night except the three who have now been named—the Duke of Cumberland, Neale and Sellis. These three are the principal actors in the drama. It is necessary to say a few words about each.

The Duke of Cumberland at this period was forty years of age. He was not married. He had seen some active service with the army in Hanover, and, if official gazettes were to be believed, had shown no small share of personal courage. In spite of this, he was the least popular of the royal Princes. His name was deeply tarnished by more than one sinister report. Private rumor is, perhaps, no more reliable than public journalism as a guide to the character of royal personages, who are the natural targets for malignant scandal. Nevertheless, it was believed by many of those who knew him best that the Duke of Cumberland had been guilty of at least one act that fully justified the public hatred. There is no doubt that he was a harsh and unprincipled

man who was gratified by the infliction of pain on others. His chief personal peculiarity was the extraordinary depth to which his eyes were set back in his head, under thick, overhanging eyebrows, giving the appearance of a perpetual scowl. His sight showed a tendency toward that blindness which has afflicted several members of his house.

It may be added that the Duke's household at this period comprised a porter, butler and several other male and female servants, among whom the wife of the valet Neale acted as housekeeper. All these persons slept on the premises.

Sellis, the occupant of the solitary room at the end of the corridor, had been in the Duke of Cumberland's service for many years. He was a native of Piedmont, and a Roman Catholic. At a former period he had been to America, in the service of a Mr. Chant. This gentleman had discharged Sellis without any complaint at the time; but long afterward he made a remarkable statement to the effect that he had suspected the man of theft, and that on one occasion, opening his eyes suddenly after a nap, as he sat alone, he perceived Sellis retiring from the room in a mysterious manner, whereupon his secret fears were so aroused that he made the man a liberal present to go back to his own country. In person Sellis was short and dark-complexioned. He had been frequently ailing of late, and was sometimes irritable. He had been slightly indisposed on the Monday, two days before, and had been attended by the apothecary to the Duke's household, who subsequently testified that he had never noticed in Sellis the least sign of mental derangement.

Sellis was married and the father of several children, one of whom he had recently lost. His family lived in an adjoining building, in apartments granted to them by the Duke of Cumberland. It was there that Sellis slept when not in immediate attendance on his master, his room in the Duke's apartments being reserved

for occasions when his services were required late at night or early in the morning. This was not the only indulgence shown him by the Duke. On the occasion of a recent journey to Windsor the Duke had taken Sellis inside the carriage with him on account of his weak health. In short, by the other servants he was regarded as a favorite. He had also received marks of friendship from Queen Charlotte, and one of the Princesses had stood sponsor, along with the Duke of Cumberland, for one of the valet's children.

The relations between Sellis and his master, therefore, appeared to be friendly, and even cordial. Yet on one or two occasions he had shown an ungrateful spirit toward the Duke. A year or two before he had refused, with an oath, to sign a paper tendered to him by the Duke's steward, accepting certain alterations in the method of paying the wages of the household. It was stated that Sellis had sometimes used insolent language to his master, who had forborne any reply. He had sometimes talked with his wife and other persons of leaving the Duke's service, but this was attributed to unpleasantness between Sellis and some of his fellow-servants. It was the general testimony that he had never complained of the Duke himself, but had often spoken of him with gratitude.

Sellis's relations with the rest of the household were less satisfactory. By some of the other servants he was considered a civil, well-behaved man. With some of them, however, he had quarreled, and it was said that he had once fought with the steward at Kew. But the person with whom his relations were admittedly the worst was the other valet, Neale.

Neale was a more recent addition to the Duke's household, and had to some extent taken Sellis's place as the closest attendant on the Duke's person. There were various accounts of the origin of the bad blood between the two men; but a year before things had come to such a pitch that Sellis had made a determined effort to drive

Neale out of the Duke's service. * He had accused him of acts of petty dishonesty and of disrespect toward their master. An intemperate letter from Sellis, demanding Neale's dismissal or his own, has been preserved.

Neale, there is no doubt, fully returned the dislike of Sellis. The two men met nearly every day in the Duke's rooms, but never spoke to each other except when compelled. Their mutual dislike was well known to the other servants, some of whom had been warned by Sellis against associating with Neale.

It will be seen presently how far these particulars help to explain the tragedy of this night.

Before the Duke of Cumberland's return from the concert, Sellis had had supper with his family in their own apartments. He appeared to be in good spirits. He informed his wife that he was under orders to pack some of his master's clothes and to accompany him to Windsor early the next morning, for which reason he left as soon as supper was over to go and sleep at the Duke's. As a matter of fact, the Duke had no intention of making any such journey the next day.

Shortly before eleven o'clock the Duke's under butler, coming into his master's bedroom with a drink for the Duke to take in the night, was surprised to find Sellis there, standing with a shirt in his hands. The reason for his surprise was that this was not Sellis's night to be on duty, the valets taking duty by turns, in the absence of special instructions. Sellis looked at the butler, but said nothing, and the latter retired, leaving Sellis in the bedroom, apparently engaged in packing the Duke's clothes. When the Duke returned, an hour later, Sellis had disappeared.

The Duke of Cumberland retired to rest between the hours of twelve and one. He appears to have been undressed on this occasion by a third valet, named Jew, but this man bore no further part in the transactions of the night. The bedroom next to the Duke's was occupied, as usual, by

Neale. The other servants were in their quarters, on other floors of the building. Outside, in the courtyard of the Palace, some men of the Coldstream Guards were stationed as sentinels, under the command of a sergeant.

One other fact, as to which there was no dispute, remains to be noted. A few days before, the Duke of Cumberland's regimental sword had been sent to be sharpened. It had now come back, and had been lying for the last two days on a couch in the Duke's bedroom.

Such was the state of affairs when silence closed down upon the sleeping Palace—a silence interrupted only by the slow tread of the sentries as they paced their rounds, a silence destined to be terribly broken before three hours had passed away.

What it was that was really taking place within those darkened rooms in the small hours of the Thursday morning may never be certainly known. Which of those three men it was that arose in the middle of the night with murder in his heart, and tried to perpetrate, or did perpetrate, a dreadful crime, is one of those questions that remain to torment the curiosity of history.

The doors were shut, the curtains were drawn. There were no witnesses to what passed—except those who, actively or passively, took part in the catastrophe. The light remains shed full upon the stage till midnight; then it is turned off for three hours. After that it is turned on again, and it reveals a shambles. The Duke of Cumberland is bleeding in the arms of Neale, the sword lies blunted and wet with blood upon the floor, blood is on the walls, the panels and the paintings, and smears of blood lead from door to door through the vast, cavernous rooms of State to the bedroom where Sellis is stretched out dead, with his neck cut almost through and a blood-stained razor fallen two yards away.

It is from the depositions of the survivors that we have first to reconstruct the drama, as it was afterward

unfolded before the tribunal that publicly pronounced upon the transaction.

The hour of half-past two has struck. The dim light of a lamp in the fireplace, standing behind a screen, falls upon the Duke of Cumberland lying in his bed asleep, with the curtains drawn around him and his head protected by a quilted nightcap. Presently there is a faint stir. The door of the closet in the inner room opens, and a figure emerges carrying a naked sword, and leaving behind in the closet a dark-lantern, a pair of slippers and the scabbard of the sword. He advances softly into the Duke's bedroom and toward the head of the bed. Then with his left hand he draws back the curtain and, leaning over the bed, brings down the sword upon the head of the sleeping man.

The Duke, roused out of his sleep, feels a second blow, descending, like the first, just where his forehead happens to be protected by the padding of the nightcap. The first impression in his half-awake mind is that some foul night thing has found its way into the room and is beating with its sharp-pointed wings about his head. A third blow quickly undeceives him; he realizes that an assassin is there aiming at his life, and he leaps frantically from the bed under a rain of blows. To his eyes, blinking in the feeble light, the swift movements of the blade appear like flashes of lightning. Like a man in a nightmare, unable yet to think coherently, and moved only by a blind instinct to escape from the unseen murderer, who is striking at him out of the dark, he rushes toward the nearest door, that leading into the little ante-room. The man behind him follows his victim, still keeping up his blows, one of which inflicts a fresh wound on the fugitive, while another severs a great splinter from the door-post. Then, as he gains the ante-room, the Duke hears the sound of the weapon thrown clattering after him on the floor, and at last his senses come back to him, and he calls, calls loudly several times—"Neale! Neale! Neale!"

Neale has been sleeping, too, sleeping in the next room, with only a thin partition wall between him and the room where this deadly struggle is going on. He is roused suddenly by hearing his name shouted in those accents of dreadful fear. He recognizes his master's voice, and immediately follows the appalling cry: "I am murdered, and the murderer is in my bedroom!"

Neale springs out of bed, bursts through the door and rushes into the ante-room, to find his master dripping with blood from many wounds. The Duke is just able to indicate the direction in which he believes the assassin has gone. Snatching up a poker as the first weapon that comes to his hand, Neale is manfully preparing to go in pursuit, when the Duke, overcome by the shock of his experience, bids the valet remain with him.

And there, in the dusk of the ante-room, the two men are left standing, while the deep tick of the clock ascends from the hall and the drops of blood fall from the Duke's forehead upon the carpet. Presently, making some movement in the dark, Neale's bare feet tread upon something on the floor, something hard, whose surface is wet to the touch. He stoops down and picks up his master's sword.

Where is the assassin all this time—that dark figure whose identity is not yet even suspected by the two men listening in the ante-room? He is stealing off, silently groping his way through the long, empty suite of rooms, but leaving a tell-tale mark on every door as he goes past, like that which the tomahawk leaves along the Indian's trail through the forest.

In a minute or two, finding all so still and silent, the Duke comes out of his daze of terror, and the two men begin to think of giving the alarm. The Duke refuses to be left alone—the assassin may be still lurking within reach. He leans upon the servant's arm and they grope their way down to the porter's room, where they procure a light. It is from Neale's lips that the astonished porter learns that His Royal Highness has been mur-

derously attacked. The porter, rising in his turn, arms himself with a sword, and then for the first time steps are taken to prevent the assassin's escape.

It is at this point that the obscurity that hangs over the transaction begins to lift. The footlights are turned up, and the conclusion of the tragedy is played in the presence of spectators.

Outside in the courtyard two soldiers are keeping guard opposite the Duke's residence, and marking the slow passage of the hours chimed out by the clock over the gateway. In the dead hour before the dawn they are suddenly startled by a cry and a commotion in the sleeping house. The door is unfastened, and a man standing in the doorway shouts out to them that the Duke of Cumberland has been murdered, and that no one is to be permitted to escape.

No one does escape. Unless the murderer succeeded in getting out of the house and away from the Palace while Neale and his master were still standing trembling in the darkened ante-room, then it was no hand from outside that did its work that night, but someone within those royal apartments.

The soldiers do more than watch against the murderer's escape. Since he has not left, he must be still inside that fast-awakening house. Somewhere behind those sombre walls, on which the first gray light of dawn is just glistening, he lurks. Someone must go in and take him on the scene of his crime.

The sergeant is called up. He comes quickly to the spot, with two other soldiers, and together they enter the house. Although it is beginning to be daylight outside, within the house, with its closed and shuttered windows, the atmosphere of night still hangs. The soldiers make their way up stairs, and presently they come upon a group of servants huddled together in fright before a door that has not yet been opened. It is the door of Sellis's room.

In the interval before the soldiers arrived upon the scene there had taken place a pathetic little incident,

which gleams out like a white thread from this gloomy tissue of crime.

The man who had given the alarm outside, on returning indoors, found the Duke of Cumberland in Neale's bedroom, where he was anxiously demanding Sellis. This man, therefore, went along the corridor to Sellis's door, which he found locked on the inside. He called out, and receiving no answer, came to the conclusion that Sellis was sleeping with his family. Therefore, he went round to their apartments and called through the keyhole: "Sellis! Sellis!" The noise awoke a little girl within, and presently the man was answered by a childish voice, thick with sleep, that murmured: "Father is sleeping at the Duke's." Thus spoke the little child, and fell asleep again, all unconscious of that red gap in her father's throat which had interrupted his sleep forever.

The porter went back, and by this time a crowd of servants were gathered. The curious absence of Sellis from the group had begun to excite a vague disquietude. Why is it, they ask, that of all this tumult nothing has penetrated to that isolated bedroom, with its door so firmly locked on the inside? Sellis sleeps soundly; he is not to be roused by the clamor around that locked door at the end of the corridor.

But that is not the only entrance to the room that has all at once assumed such strange importance. The mention of the second door comes first from a woman who has joined the awestruck group, a woman who had cause to fear the silent inmate of that guarded chamber—Ann Neale, the housekeeper, wife of the man whom Sellis hated. At her suggestion, the excited throng, which has now been joined by the sergeant and his men, make their way into the dark, shuttered State apartments, and pass through them, guided by the light of a candle that one of the servants carries in his hand; and as they go they notice ominous stains on the doors which tell them that that way has been already traversed by some-

one who had no desire for light or companionship on his stealthy course. At last they come to the remote door, the door that is *not* locked on the inside. And having reached it they pause, terrified, hearing a certain sound—a most peculiar, bubbling sound, like the noise of someone gurgling water in his throat.

At what time did the first suspicion as to Sellis's fate arise? The porter afterward stated that on first entering of that sound within the bedroom convinced him that Sellis had been murdered as well as the Duke. The sergeant affirmed that on first entering the house he was met by two servants, who cried out to him that the Duke of Cumberland was wounded and Sellis murdered. When the fatal door was opened at last the porter took one glance inside, saw the ghastly figure on the bed and uttered the decisive exclamation: "Good God! Mr. Sellis has cut his throat!"

The servant who was holding the candle, hearing these words, let it drop from his shaking hand. One of the soldiers snatched it in time, and stepped across the threshold. The sergeant, Creighton, took the candle from him and walked into the room.

The spectacle that met his eyes and the eyes of the affrighted servants who crept in after him was one almost too shocking to be described. The inmate of the room was lying, partly dressed, upon the bed, his arms composed quietly by his side, his head and shoulders supported on the pillow. Such support was indeed necessary to keep the head in place, for the throat had been divided by a stroke so deep that the head seemed to be almost sliced from the trunk. And at this moment, when that throng of horror-stricken witnesses burst into the room, the body of the dead man was still warm, and the blood was still running and frothing out of that horrid chasm in his neck.

Some other gruesome details that the chamber of death presented have to be remarked. A razor, apparently that which inflicted the death-stroke, was picked up off the floor, two paces

from the bed. A white handkerchief, cut in several places, also lay on the floor. A blue coat belonging to the dead man was hanging near the bed, splashed with blood on the left sleeve. His neckcloth was found also cut, as if the first attempt to cut his throat had been made before it was removed. And on the washstand was a basin filled with water tinged with blood, as if someone had attempted to cleanse his hands from incriminating stains.

By this time a surgeon, Mr. Horne, had been brought to the house. He found the Duke of Cumberland lying on his own bed, and was in the act of bandaging his wounds when a servant came to the door of the room and used these words: "Sellis is murdered!"

At this the Duke manifested great anxiety, and ordered Mr. Horne to go and attend Sellis. The surgeon went, but after a glance at the body returned, saying there was no doubt that Sellis had killed himself.

Up to this point there had been no suggestion that Sellis was the author of the attack on the Duke of Cumberland. But presently a search was made through the apartments, and in the closet already referred to were found the scabbard of the Duke's sword, the dark-lantern and the pair of slippers, the latter being marked with Sellis's name. On these discoveries was based the theory that Sellis had concealed himself in the closet before his master's return home, in order to perpetrate the crime.

At this point the public evidence terminates, leaving two facts, and only two facts, clearly ascertained—the injuries received by the Duke of Cumberland and the death of his valet.

Such an event taking place in a royal palace demanded and received investigation. And it was at this stage that the mystery already surrounding the case was made deeper by the course pursued by the authorities.

The royal palaces, it must be explained, are not within the jurisdiction of the ordinary coroners, but of an

officer of the Board of Green Cloth, who is styled the Coroner of the Verge, and who is appointed by the sovereign. The office of Coroner of the Verge was held at this time by a person named Adams. He was informed of the affair early on Thursday morning, and at once took steps to summon a jury, as prescribed by a statute of Henry VIII., from the yeoman officers of the King's household.

But the investigation was not left entirely in his hands. The matter was deemed grave enough to demand the attention of the Privy Council, which at that time still exercised some administrative functions. Accordingly, some of the Privy Counsellors, chief among whom was Lord Ellenborough, at once Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench and a member of the Government, assembled at the Palace and examined all of the persons in a position to throw any light on the transaction. These examinations took place in camera, and at their close the deposition of each witness was reduced into the form of a deposition by the chief police magistrate.

All this was on the Thursday. On the next day the public inquest was held by the Coroner of the Verge. But in the meantime Mr. Adams seems to have received a hint which led to his withdrawing the original summonses and calling a fresh jury, this time of tradesmen residing within the verge of the court. The reason afterward assigned for this departure from strict legality was a desire to make the inquiry more open and free from suspicion, a reason that is in itself a recognition of the impression that this strange affair was calculated to produce on the public mind. *Qui s'excuse, s'accuse*. Unfortunately for the object in view, nearly the whole of the tradesmen summoned enjoyed the custom of the Court, though the foreman, one Francis Place, appears to have been a man of independent character, who had made himself notorious as a supporter of Sir Francis Burdett, the popular demagogue of the day. But what really deprived

the inquest of its claim to public confidence was the indiscreet, or discreet, action of the Privy Council in preparing the evidence the day before. Any person who is at all familiar with the way in which evidence is prepared in ordinary actions will not require to be told that, after those proceedings of the Privy Council, what followed at the inquest was practically an independent prosecution of the deceased man, Sellis.

Mr. Adams, the coroner, opened the case as counsel for the prosecution by informing the jury that there was very little doubt that the attack on the Duke of Cumberland was the work of the deceased. Each of the witnesses then had his deposition read over to him, and the jury were then invited to put any questions they thought proper.

The only person who availed himself of the permission was Place. He was anxious to see justice done, but, not being a trained advocate, was, of course, quite incapable of sifting testimony, and made no serious impression on the case as it had left Lord Ellenborough's hands. His questions were chiefly confined to one point—whether the deceased had ever shown ill-feeling against the Duke of Cumberland. The answers were unanimous that he had received nothing but kindness from his royal master from first to last, though more than one witness spoke of his great animus against Neale; and Neale himself, after pretending reluctance to speak, made the extraordinary statement that he believed Sellis had intended that he, Neale, should be charged with the murder, in order to ruin him.

One medical man only, a surgeon named Jackson, was brought forward to say that the wound in Sellis's neck was one that might have been inflicted by his own hand. The body, when viewed by the jury, was still dressed and in the same position, and no attempt was made to ascertain whether it bore the marks of any other wounds, or whether that in the neck was in truth the cause of death.

On this evidence the jury brought in their verdict after an hour's consideration. They found Sellis guilty of *felo de se*.

The wife and the mother of the unfortunate man were subsequently pensioned and went abroad. With their disappearance it was believed the history of the affair was closed.

But the public was not so easily satisfied as the jury. To many minds there appeared to be very grave doubts left undisposed of by the verdict at the inquest. In order to understand these doubts it is necessary to consider one or two points that were either slurred over or suppressed at the inquiry.

The first which must strike everyone is the total absence of motive for the murderous attack supposed to have been made by Sellis on the Duke of Cumberland. On this point even the acute Lord Ellenborough seems to have overreached himself. As a matter of fact, the Duke was sometimes guilty of gross brutality toward his valets, including Sellis. A bigoted Protestant himself, he frequently reviled the valet's religion in his presence. A certain gentleman who was intimately acquainted with the Duke was present one day when Sellis was putting on his master's boots, and saw the Duke push the valet over with his foot, causing the man to give him a look that the Duke's friend remembered years afterward, when he related the incident to the present writer's informant. But nothing of this appeared in the evidence given at the inquest. The existence of ill-feeling between the Duke and Sellis was strenuously denied. The hatred between Sellis and Neale, which was as strenuously insisted on, could furnish no possible motive for an attack by Sellis on the Duke, though it might have furnished a very strong one for an attack on Neale, or for an attack by Neale on Sellis.

Much stress was laid at the inquest on the fact that the door of Sellis's room was locked. But it was the door opening on the corridor that was locked. The theory of the prosecu-

tion, if that phrase may be employed, was that Sellis had made his way back into his room by the other door, the door that was found unlocked. If both doors had been found locked the case against Sellis would have been nearly decisive. The suggestion was that Sellis returned to his room, leaving the door behind him unlocked, that he was in the act of endeavoring to cleanse himself from the Duke's blood when he heard the clamor outside in the corridor, and that he thereupon resolved to commit suicide. It is not easy to understand, therefore, why the door on the corridor should have been locked, and not the other.

Another difficulty suggested by the depositions arises out of the attitude in which the body was found. Assuming that the wound in the throat was the cause of death, it might have been expected that death would have been instantaneous, that the razor with which the deed was done would have been found clutched in the right hand and the arms fallen in some less composed fashion upon the bed. The description of the witnesses reads like that of a body laid out after death, rather than that of a man who had just violently killed himself. Nor is the incident of the neckcloth quite easy to understand. That a man should attempt to cut his throat through his neckcloth certainly appears improbable. It would be easy to understand that a murderer, seeking to create the appearance of suicide in his victim, might try to inflict such a wound without staying to remove the neckcloth till he found it necessary to do so. It was stated long afterward by the foreman of the jury that Sellis lived for twenty minutes after his throat was cut. Such a statement was not, because it could not have been, based on ocular evidence, and therefore simply discredits its author.

One of the principal points brought forward against Sellis was the circumstance of his slippers being found in the closet adjoining the Duke's bedroom. But the present writer has it on the authority of an old man who

was connected with the Palace of St. James at the time, that these slippers were found with the toes pointing inward—that is to say, not in the position in which they would have been left by a man standing ready to issue from the closet, and taking his feet out of them at the last moment—but in the position in which they would naturally have been placed by a person carrying them to the closet and depositing them inside. There was another peculiarity in the manner in which this closet was locked that was considered to tell powerfully against the theory of Sellis's guilt, but this circumstance had slipped from my informant's mind.

Another circumstance that was left insufficiently accounted for was the blood on the left sleeve of Sellis's coat. It was the theory of the courtiers that this was the result of the murderous attack on the Duke of Cumberland, and that it was the brushing of this cuff upon the doors of the State apartments that had left the stains afterward observed. But it is difficult again to understand why the left sleeve should have been the one exclusively or principally stained. It was not suggested that Sellis was a left-handed man. Men do not usually use the left hand either for holding a sword or for opening doors; but the left hand is the one they naturally raise to ward off attack.

Such are some of the considerations which went to create the impression that Sellis was, indeed, what some of the servants had called him in the first moments, a murdered man. There is, however, one fact in the case that weighs powerfully on the other side.

According to the evidence of all those who entered the death chamber, Sellis had only just expired when they came in. This circumstance, if true, is scarcely reconcilable with any theory except that of suicide. And the evidence on this particular point bears the stamp of truth. The ghastly sound heard through the door and the sight beheld on entering are described in a manner ex-

tremely convincing. The little discrepancies on minor points, which the present narrative has endeavored to reconcile, as to who held the candle, and who was first to go into the room, rebut the idea that all the witnesses were mere phonographs repeating the words of Lord Ellenborough. Moreover, the very fact that they testified to so improbable a circumstance—a circumstance so much *against* the official theory—as that the dead man's arms were laid straight down by his side and that the razor was two yards off on the floor, tend to show that this part of the evidence was genuine. And it undoubtedly carried the inference that the valet's death had taken place only just before, and when the Duke of Cumberland had already alarmed the house and was lying in his own room under the surgeon's hands.

This circumstance remains, and must ever remain, mysterious. It is the one element in the case that must always restrain history from pronouncing a positive judgment.

Thus far we have considered the transaction simply as it affected Sellis. But there were two other persons whose character was involved in these events.

Neale's position in the matter is deserving of some attention. According to his own statement, Sellis's death was calculated to throw suspicion on *him*. Is this the expression of conscious guilt, which accuses itself by excusing itself, or is it rather an attempt to lay a false scent, to divert attention from the quarter to which suspicion was really directed? It is true that Neale had strong motives for removing a man who was hourly plotting against him, who had charged him with thefts, and made repeated efforts to procure his dismissal. But Neale, again, like Sellis, could have no possible motive for the assault upon the Duke. Not only did he enjoy his master's favor, but such a proceeding was utterly unnecessary for his purpose, if he desired to rid himself of Sellis. It would have been far easier, as well as

more natural, to make his way direct to Sellis's room, murder him in his sleep, arrange the appearances of suicide, and then retire to his own room, leaving the discovery to be made the following morning. If Neale had been the culprit, or the suspected culprit, there was no occasion for the gathering of the Privy Council, the exertions of Lord Ellenborough, the anxiety to give an air of impartiality to the proceedings of the inquest. Doubtful as this man's character was in many respects, it is remarkable that public opinion never for an instant charged him with the death of Sellis. It passed him by, and from the first fastened the crime on the third actor in the drama, the Duke of Cumberland.

The Duke of Cumberland's character was much against him. He was the most universally detested man of his age. He had shown himself so callous and depraved that it is impossible to believe that he would have been deterred from murder by any mere moral consideration. And the obvious and simple explanation of his wounds, such as they were, was that they had been either received in a mortal struggle with his unfortunate valet, or self-inflicted, to account for the blood stains left by his crime.

That the proceedings of the Privy Council and of the Coroner of the Verge were prompted by a desire to ward off suspicion from the Duke, there can be no kind of doubt. To the same desire must be attributed the accumulation of evidence as to his kindness toward the dead man and the studious suppression of his acts of harshness. That he had behaved brutally to Sellis in the past has been shown. And the favors heaped upon him more recently are in themselves the strongest confirmation of the inner version of the whole transaction, that version which those best acquainted with the Duke believed to their dying day.

The secret of the whole affair, then, is that Sellis was a blackmailer. He had in his possession an ugly se-

cret relating to the Duke's past life. It was this power that had enabled him to extort concessions that appeared to spring from his master's goodness of heart, and that had tempted him to become insolent, quarrelsome and ungovernable, till the Duke was driven to the desperate resolution of getting rid of him on this fatal night. The exact moment of the murder cannot be exactly known. But that the Duke went into the sleeping man's room, that he locked the door by which interruption might arrive, that he attacked and slew his victim, that he then, after making some attempt to wash his hands, returned through the State apartments, leaving those marks upon the doors; that he or Neale composed the dead man's limbs and inflicted the final gash that was to account for the death, and that, finally, having given himself some slight cuts, he arranged with Neale the story that was to be told to the household—such is the story that has always been believed by those in the best position to judge.

From time to time daring publications appeared hinting at this version of the facts. Such publications were suppressed and the publishers punished for libel. Nevertheless, the legend of the Duke's crime has had a mysterious vitality in those subterranean channels wherein is preserved the history that seldom finds its way into newspapers and books. Only a few years back the valet of a gentleman residing in St. James's informed his master one morning, of his own accord, while waiting on him, that he had heard from some of the grooms in the Royal Mews that a Duke of Cumberland had once murdered his valet in St. James's Palace.

Nor is the memory of the Duke's crime confined to those in humble station. Two curious facts, not hitherto published, show the tenacity with which this century-old scandal haunts the regions of the Court. Some time ago a certain Court official desired to write a history of St. James's Palace. In the course of his investigations he

came upon the traces of this mystery. He was preparing to give it a prominent position in his volume, when he received a request, that amounted to a command, from a royal Prince, still alive, to omit all mention of the affair, and he scrupulously obeyed.

The second fact is even more singular. About ten years ago, a certain Department of State drew up a scheme of retrenchment in the expenditure upon the royal palaces. Among the other proposals was one to abolish the office of Coroner of the

Verge. The scheme was submitted for the approval of the highest authority in the land, whose observations on the various proposals are still to be seen on the document in a confidential drawer of the Department. Against the recommendation to abolish the Coronership stands the following significant comment: "Disapproved; there have been occasions in the past when it would have been highly inconvenient to have had the palaces included in the jurisdiction of the ordinary coroners."



A SEASIDE COMPOSITE

BELINDA wears most fetching frills,
And Chloe's curls are witching quite,
While Daphne's silvery laughter thrills
The sweetly-scented Summer night.

Myrtilla's eyes are bright as stars;
Susanne a shapely ankle shows,
And Hildah's hose disport gay bars
Whene'er the wilding zephyr blows.

Clarissa's teeth, Helèna's smile,
Patricia's mischief-making eye,
Penelope's most artless wile—
All these attract me passing by.

But yet, though each is passing fair,
And each in turn I fain would woo,
Some whispering bids me leave them there,
To find their sum, Sweetheart, in you.

ARTHUR STANLEY RIGGS.



NECESSARY SILENCE

MRS. HIGHBLOWER—How quiet your little boy is, Mrs. Slimson!
Really a model youth.

WILLIE SLIMSON—Well, mother told me not to say anything to embarrass her while I was here, and I haven't dared open my mouth.

BECAUSE OF THE DOG

By Helene Hicks

A FRENCHMAN'S favorite saying in all emergencies is: "*Cherchez la femme.*" But in this case there were two women, both young and elegant.

One was the Wife, and the other was dear to the heart of the Wife's husband.

The Wife was a cosmopolite, fond of luxurious travel and addicted to sport, especially the hunting of big game in mountain fastnesses.

The Man was not poor; therefore, since there was another woman, the Wife was at liberty to follow her own sweet, wayward will.

The Other Woman had a penchant for princesse frocks, because they accentuated her grace. She moved like a poem in the flesh. The lady had also a fancy for expensive hothouse flowers, but that fact has nothing to do with this story. She likewise doted on dogs, and one of these latter, a priceless Blenheim, was the cause of all the trouble.

The Man knew there was danger when the Other Woman took a notion to go up into the mountains because he was called there on business. The Wife was camping out not far from the only fashionable hotel in the Hills. But the Other Woman was coaxing, and he knew she was lonesome without him, for she had few friends. And so the Other Woman went to the Hotel Alabama, and where she went the Dog went also.

The Other Woman arrived at the Hotel in the middle of the week, with her maid, many boxes and the Dog.

The Man, whose business was in a nearby Town, went over to the Hotel to spend Sunday.

The Wife, who found the shooting bad and the fishing worse, came back to civilization on the same Saturday, just in time to get freshened up a bit and go down to the Hotel office to see who had come out on the train. She was the first person the Man saw as he descended from the 'bus.

Of course, a man is always glad to see his wife, but—

Well, this man made the best of it, and they went into the office together, talking cheerfully, when, lo and behold! a small Blenheim spaniel appeared from somewhere and commenced to devour the Man, rending the air with shrill manifestations of greeting.

The Wife drew aside in astonishment, for the Dog was spreading himself joyfully over a large circle of space.

It was evident that the Man was pained at the Dog's behavior, and everybody around the office looked astonishment at the demonstrations.

Then the Other Woman appeared in the doorway and called, "Kuki! Kuki!" so that Kuki ran to her, but when the Other Woman tried to seize Kuki he evaded her and rushed back to the man, then capered from one to the other, until, with cheeks that crimsoned beneath the Wife's keen glance, the Other Woman disappeared and left the Dog victoriously licking the blacking from the Man's shoes.

The Man, since there was nothing else to do, submitted, and when, after registering, he joined his wife, still followed by the Dog, he studiously refrained from looking at her.

"Dear little fellow!" cooed the Wife. "I wish I had a dog like that.

I never knew, dear, that dogs were so fond of you."

"I often have strange dogs follow me in the street," said the Man, idiotically.

"How sweet!" said the Wife; "but, my dear, I have been wanting to ask you something for a long time. You know the Lounsberys are going abroad in a week now, and over into Egypt next Winter, and I have never visited the East. You said it was too expensive a trip last year, but I'm sure you must be doing better now."

"You shall go, love."

"And you would not care very much if I went up to St. Petersburg for the Spring, would you? The Harmons are to be there."

"I can deny you nothing, dearest," said the Man, mournfully.

"You are a dear, generous, unself-

ish old darling, and I don't wonder that even the dogs love you. I'll kiss you when you come up stairs, but now I must run off and find Celeste. I want to get away as soon as possible, and I shall not let her unpack my duds."

The Man went into the barroom and sat down at a small table, and the Dog got up in his lap and cavorted over him.

A friend sauntered along.

"What are you going to have?" asked the Man. "It is on me. Everything is on me. I have had a shock, and after a shock I always take something strong."

"Same for me," said his friend. "You don't look exactly brisk. That's a nice dog you have there."

"Yes," said the Man, sadly; "but such an expensive animal!"



OUT OF THE ASHES

A WORD—but a word—proudly spoken,
And our Eden was Eden no more!
A word, and the vows were all broken,
The days of our dreaming were o'er.
I saw the tears gleam on her lashes,
I heard a sweet sigh, half repressed;
A castle of love was in ashes—
Still triumph was high in my breast!
For me—ah, for me!—her proud spirit
At the door of her yearning heart lay;
I heard her sob, happy to hear it,
And, leaving her crushed, went away.

I pictured her tearful and sighing,
I thought of her wasted and wan;
I dreamed of her drooping and dying
For the valorous knight that was gone!
I looked for a message, and waited;
I found it, last night, at my door;
I opened it, trembling, elated—
Her wedding card fell to the floor!
I gazed at her neat superscription,
I gazed at it, wondering, long,
And barely escaped a conniption—
The middle initial was wrong.

S. E. KISER.

THE NEW PRINCE HAL

By Clinton Ross

LEOPOLD, Crown Prince of Nassau-Cassel, was a gay, charming fellow, who, after leading a life something like that which Shakespeare assigns to *Prince Hal*, suddenly turned earnest, and in the grave troubles assailing his State, became opposed to the King and his Ministers. So strong was his opposition to the Premier, the Count of Rothan, that the latter chose to change the succession. In the course of this plan the Baron Felsberg and Fritz Von Hersch, the Countess Nathalie's brother, were arrested.

One evening about seven, when she was dressing for dinner, her maid Maria brought the Countess a bit of soiled paper hastily folded. She saw it was her brother's writing, and read:

DEAR NATHALIE:

Yesterday morning on leaving the Prince, Baron Felsberg and I were arrested and carried to the Leopold Schloss before we had accomplished what we had intended. We are kept apart, and closely confined. However, I have succeeded in bribing a gaoler to get this note to you. It is of the utmost importance that the Prince should know this, and even his own liberty may depend on the knowledge! You must be careful, most careful, whom you send with the message. Have him take the little lane that leads from the König Strasse to the east of the Palace gardens. He will come to a door in the wall, and knock three times, when it will be opened. He will say "Düzallern," when he will be led to the apartments in the east wing of the old Palace, where the Prince now keeps himself busily employed. Whether Felsberg has had a word reach him I do not know. Use your wit; everything depends on you.

For three minutes the Countess Nathalie sat over this note—no longer; she had quick decision, and once having decided, went directly to the end. Whom could she trust with such a message? Whom could she look to, when every moment counted?

She must carry the message herself.

She sat down and wrote a note, and then called to the maid.

"Maria," she said, "have this sent to the Baroness Norberg. I am not going to-night. And I will put on a walking dress and a heavy cloak, and bring a heavy veil; you are to come with me."

Maria stared, used the privilege of an old servant to ask some questions, and then did as she was bid.

The Dowager Countess came in at this moment. Nathalie explained that she was tired and would not go to the Baroness's, and persuaded her mother to go without her. And then, when the coast was clear, with Maria she sailed out by a side door.

"They will talk about me, I suppose," she said to herself. "But what am I? And I must—I must."

The two walked on through the crowd of the König Strasse and turned into the lane bordering the wall of the Palace gardens, coming at last to a gate. The lane, fortunately, was deserted. Here she followed the directions of the note. The gate was opened.

"Düzallern!"

"This way, madame," said the man, without a show of surprise, being one of those trained to passivity. At the door to the passage leading to the Prince's apartments he asked her to

wait, and went in. It seemed to her hours before he returned, while she was troubled with the maid, who kept repeating:

"My lady, my lady, what are we doing?"

"Keep quiet; trust me, as you always have, and say nothing of what you hear or see to-night, or else you hurt me."

"Yes 'um," whispered the woman.

At last the door opened, and Conrad, the Prince's servant, said:

"This way, madame."

"I must see him alone."

"He understands." And the man led the way.

The Prince stood awaiting her, his two favorite hounds by his side. As Conrad retired the Countess pushed back her veil.

"The Little Countess!"

"Yes." And as briefly as possible she told him her mission.

He listened quietly, only once exclaiming, "The fox!" and at the end:

"When you knew me only as a suitor you did me honor, and now you honor me the more."

And then, looking at her, he said:

"You are more to me than duty."

"Do not talk in that way," she cried. "Let me respect you, as I do; and if you forget your duty—your career—I cannot."

"I will not forget you, nor the respect I owe you; nor shall I shirk the burden God has put on me," he added.

"And my brother?"

"Yes; you are here for him. Believe me, he will suffer only temporary inconvenience. It seems that those who serve me must suffer. Now I will have Conrad see you to your door."

But Conrad interrupted:

"His Majesty is on his way to you, and he is already in the corridor."

The Countess thought she should cry out, and the maid whimpered again. But the Prince threw open the inner door.

"There is no other way. You will be safe there until it is over."

Hardly was the door closed when

the King appeared, followed by a servant, whom he dismissed.

Leopold IV. showed his infirmities of mind and body. His eyes, faded with disease and care, at times could be strangely bright. His face, weak and vacillating, could then declare that power and majesty characteristic of the Düzallerns. Now he was angry, and, as he threw himself into a chair, his words came quickly and threateningly:

"And you, sir, are you King already? Am I deposed, that you dare to attempt to trifle with my Minister? You are not content with turning rebel, with abetting the enemies of the Crown?"

"To side with them," said the Prince, calmly, "is the only way of saving the Crown."

"So you have tried to persuade me."

"And do persuade Your Majesty when Von Mark is not around."

"You will see this Von Mark directly. He is on his way here. I did not know how long you might be in coming to me, and so I came to you."

Then the Prince said, almost brokenly:

"Father, I have been unconventional, and more—I have associated with men of whom you don't approve. I have carried my military education to the point of studying the methods of other nations. I have lived among the people and tried to see how they see things, which is difficult for men born as you and I, who are surrounded by that thing, bureaucracy."

"Talk, talk, talk," said the King, petulantly.

"It takes much talk sometimes to explain a little action," said the Prince. "But I love this land of ours. Left to the nobility and the capitalists, it is absorbed. Our cause lies with the people, and the people's cause is ours. Has not the Emperor himself seen that in Prussia?"

"But this rioting in the Odenwald?"

"God knows the Government is to blame, and I propose to correct the Government."

"By illegally abducting my Minister, Von Mark."

"Let us say arresting him. He had the same intention in regard to me. But he has watched my friends and, armed with your authority, has been good enough to put them under arrest."

"Yes," said the King.

"But I concede this in regard to Von Mark: he is an honest man up to the point of carrying out his plans at whatever cost. He is as stubborn as the devil. He is a good man as your Minister, if we use him—not if he uses us. And he will find that I, with opinions directly opposed to him, am as stubborn as he—though I am in a den of prejudice."

Conrad at the door announced:

"His Excellency the Count of Rothan."

Rudolph Von Mark, the Minister, was at this time a man of seventy, tall, thin, emaciated, with a smooth face, which was that of the proverbial diplomat; he looked a priest, a scholar and a man most keen in affairs; his face was like a mask, and the black eyes, under low lids, never expressed an emotion, whatever the occasion.

But the Prince, too, was learning how to slip on the diplomatic mask.

"You honor me, Count," he said. "Old Germany visits young Germany."

"Princes," said the Count, "belong to old Germany, which will continue. But we differ there, Your Highness. There seems no way for us to patch up our differences."

"We both resort to extreme measures," said the Prince. "And yet your courtesy will not be lacking in granting me the release of my friends."

"The King grants, not the Minister. But I have taken the liberty of releasing your friends, knowing His Majesty would sanction it."

"You were right, Von Mark," said the old King, now in the presence of that superior mind that moulded his own.

"Has Your Majesty broached to

the Prince the subject on which we are here?"

"No," said the King, with a visible tremor.

Von Mark continued:

"It's our only way, Your Highness. The Ministry—all approve. You must either give up the succession voluntarily, or you will be regarded as a person dangerous to the State, and will be restrained. There is no alternative. With the socialists and the labor leaders using your name there will be anarchy. I have stated the situation clearly, Your Majesty?"

"Yes, Von Mark. Leopold, why can't you see as we see?"

"Father," the Prince said, slowly, "God knows I love you, but I have only the light of my opinions. They tell me there is but one way to save Nassau-Cassel—my way. I stand with the people and am their watchword, and in this crisis I will not desert them. My answer is, Von Mark, that you will find the word 'must' a hard one to crack with a Düzallern. I will not voluntarily give up the succession, nor will I submit to restraint."

"God help you!" said the old King.

"And may He and you forgive me if I be wrong."

The King's hand sought his son's.

"I forgive you now—yes, now. And I am sorry for this—sorry—heart sorry."

"But there is no other way," said Von Mark.

"But there is no other way," the King assented. "Good-night, Leopold."

"A good night, and many good nights, father."

"I care for but few to see you changed."

"Good night, Your Highness," said the Minister, and he passed out with the King and supporting him.

The Prince remained in thought until suddenly he heard the Countess's voice.

"Your Highness," she said, "I heard. I could not help but hear, and I wish so much that I might help you."

"I know you do," said the Prince;

"and the wish can help me, and I thank you. I am killing that old man whom I love; but I must keep on—there is no other way."

"No; I see as you do," said the Little Countess. "I understand. There is no other way."

"But you will believe that you give me heart for that way?"

And then she looked at him as if she would see into his soul.

"Yes," she said at last. "And now, good-night."

"Yes, you must not stay here. Conrad!"

"Your Highness?"

"You will see the Countess and her maid to their door."

"Yes, Your Highness."

The Prince with the two dogs followed them to the little door.

"Remember, you give me heart," he said, in a low voice.

And she looked at him and said:

"I thank God, Your Highness, that I can do so much for you."

And then she was outside.

She walked like one in a dream, seeing nothing, hearing nothing. She did not notice the officers, who eyed her and followed her on the König Strasse; they troubled Conrad and the maid. One of these men stepped forward under the street lamp, and looking up she saw Carl, the Crown Prince's cousin.

"Let's see your face, my dear," said that worthy, in a voice heavy with drink; and he snatched away her veil and recoiled at the cold, haughty eyes that met his. And then, quickly, Conrad's fist sent him sprawling on the flagging. In an instant his companions turned on Conrad, but the first to reach him drew back.

"It's the Prince's valet, Conrad."

"Hurry on, madame, before the crowd. Stop screaming, woman!" Conrad added to the maid.

Presently they were at the Countess's house, and mistress and maid reached their apartment apparently unnoticed. With a sigh of relief the Countess found that her mother had not returned.

But the events of the evening

troubled her; yet not once did she think of herself and the possible consequences of the meeting with Carl of Dornach.

Leaving the Countess Nathalie at the door, Leopold walked moodily along the passage, to be stopped by his orderly, Philip.

"Colonel Hahn is waiting Your Highness, as directed."

Hahn arose to meet him as he entered.

"Oh, sit down, Hahn. Have you found out anything more?"

"Yes; Von Mark had Felsberg and Von Hersch arrested this morning."

The Prince smiled whimsically.

"Yes; I know that. Von Mark himself told me about it and, to show his scorn of my little plots, has magnanimously released my friends."

"But the intention is to arrest Your Highness as well."

"I have been told that, too—providing I don't submit. I think I am not likely to submit."

"To make the arrest more effective, it is the intention to have it take place at the coming Court Ball."

"Oh, I see," said Leopold, dropping into a chair. "The Minister strives for dramatic effect, which, indeed, is often a good thing in politics. Well, I will try my hand, too, at dramatic effect. I will submit to that arrest, should it take place, and I will leave the rest to the people."

"Your Highness may be right, but——"

"You don't think for a moment I am going to run away, do you?" Leopold asked, laughingly.

"No; not for a moment, Your Highness."

The Prince leaned over toward him almost fiercely.

"Leave the rest to me, my dear Hahn. I will bring it about. I am going to keep on in the path of duty as I see it. Nothing under heaven shall swerve me. And do you keep your eyes open; I need you."

"And I ever shall do my best," Hahn said. "Does Your Highness wish anything more to-night?"

"Not to-night, my dear Hahn, but to-morrow—don't forget the morrow. And now, good-night."

After Hahn had gone he sat absorbed for some moments, and did not notice Conrad's entrance.

"You saw the Countess to her door?"

"Yes, Highness; but there was an unfortunate accident."

"An accident?" Leopold cried, turning pale.

Conrad told of the meeting with Carl.

"What did you do?"

"I knocked him down."

"That was right."

"And seeing who I was, his companions let me pass on."

"I would have killed him as I would a rat!" the Prince exclaimed.

"Should I have done it, Highness?"

"Oh, no, Conrad; you did exactly right. I was thinking aloud," he added, smiling at Conrad.

But the situation troubled him. She, who had risked so much for him, would be talked about, and he would be powerless to show his protection without increasing the scandal, knowing Carl as he did. The situation maddened him.

"Conrad," he said at last, "you will call on the Prince of Dornach at ten in the morning. You will say you are from me, and will insist on seeing the Prince privately. Then you will tell him this—remember the exact words—'I am sent here by my master to tell you that, if any insinuation, any hint of scandal, escapes you about any one of my master's friends, my master will hold you accountable.' Repeat it."

Conrad repeated it.

"Again," said the Prince.

Conrad repeated it a second time.

"Yes; you have it, I think," said the Prince. "I don't care to write such a message. Now call Philip. You two are to go with me."

Leopold did not take the cover of night for his present mission because he wished to hide it, but his work and the interruptions had engaged him till now; and he had promised to

meet and listen to the statements of some prominent labor and socialist leaders, and he must not break his word.

They cheered him as he entered the room, in a house in an obscure street, where they were assembled. He listened to them and reasoned with them. When he differed he told them frankly.

"You go too far, Herr Stein," he said to one of the leaders. "Such propositions will be met by the law and by the soldiers now and when I shall be King, should I live that long."

It was past dawn when he had ended with this business. He was tired and sleepy, and, indeed, he hardly had slept for three days. Some passing workmen, recognizing him, paused and cheered. The Prince bowed and passed on, deep in thought. But nothing troubled him more than the meeting between the Countess Nathalie and Carl.

II

THE Dreibadeners, even in the serious political troubles now threatening Nassau-Cassel, still were gay. Agitation ran rife in the streets, in the cafés and the beer gardens, in the meetings of the Diet; but the people of the good city remembered that this was the week of the annual Court Ball, the great social affair of the year. The *Court Circular* was eagerly scanned for the names of those personages who would be present, and the ball quite divided the attention with the fierce rivalry between the Prince and the Government.

In a community where the love of art, of beauty and music had so long been a part of the people's minds and hearts, a function gorgeous with colors and appealing to the senses was not forgotten. Yet perhaps this week was the most serious in the history of Nassau-Cassel. The representative of the hundred thousand striking miners in the Odenwald

would meet no one but the Prince. They disregarded the Government, and it was the Prince who stated their case in the Diet—the Prince, whom the people loved and whom the nobles hated as threatening their ancient prerogatives.

True to his word, the Count of Rothan had released Felsberg and Von Hersch from detention in the Leopold Schloss. He had a bolder plan, which he thought would show the iron hand of the Minister who would destroy those who dared oppose him. The two certainly felt only sorry heroes as they sat that night in the café in Düzallern Forest and talked over their plot that had ended so boyishly—Herbert Felsberg sanguine and Von Hersch in a bad temper. Felsberg rather blamed it to the Prince, whose abominable power of persuading his friends to carry out his wishes had perverted their judgment. He approved the far-seeing discernment of Von Mark, though it had been brought to bear against him. Felsberg himself declared that he was sadly out of conceit with himself as a diplomat, yet was stanch in his belief in his master. Both Felsberg and Von Hersch had tried to get audience with the Prince, but had failed because he was closeted with the King. So they had waited and talked the situation over together, though Von Hersch was eager to see Nathalie. But it was not until long past midnight when Von Hersch reached his house and sought his sister.

She was very pale and her eyes were strangely brilliant as she told him what she had done and of the meeting with Carl on the König Strasse. He was not mild with adjectives when he heard of the fellow's effrontery, and swore that he should have it out with him.

"Yes," said Nathalie, slowly, "it is a serious matter with me; but it is not the best way to go at serious matters impulsively. If this is brought up, we must treat it with disdain, that is all. If I meet Prince Carl, I shall not avoid him, but treat him with studied politeness."

"And," said he, dismally, "the whole thing was so foolish, so needless."

"As it has turned out," Nathalie said. "But I am glad that I did as I did. I should do it again, I think. He is so much alone, and whatever we may do for him we should be glad to do."

He then told her all he had promised to do for the Crown Prince's cause, and she nodded grave approval, while she surprised him by the knowledge she showed of the politics of Nassau-Cassel.

Suddenly he saw there was a change in his sister. She had become a woman, with a keen, active mind; and he looked at her in surprise.

"Yes," he said; "you are a great deal like our grandfather, the great Count Von Hersch."

"He fought the world, and won. Let us hope that we may. And you must not forget that we are Von Herschs, too."

"But is it not disloyal for us to mix up in the affairs of the Prince?" the brother asked, doubtfully.

"The affairs of this kingdom stand for the affairs of the world. We have become involved in them, and I can't see that we—placed as we are above poverty—could find in the course of our lives a better interest. Oh," she went on, "when we go back to our estate we must do things. We must see what we can do for the less fortunate."

"You, too, are under the Prince's influence."

She blushed hotly, and at last said, gravely:

"So long as our Prince is as he is now, he is on the side of the weak."

They talked until past dawn, and as he left her she kissed him as she had not in many a day.

The next afternoon, failing to get an audience with the Prince, Von Hersch called on that clever woman the Baroness Roland. She was alone, save for her mother crocheting in an adjoining room. You may judge how undiplomatic he was, or, if you choose, how charming this lady, or perhaps it was, too, that he thought she best

could advise him about the Countess Nathalie, the consequences of whose adventure troubled him. He told her the whole story. She listened, and said at last:

"Your sister has the indiscretion of nobleness, yet there may be scandal—yes, you must expect it. 'I know the meanness, the littleness, of Carl.'"

Then she said:

"Your sister loves the Crown Prince."

He started at this.

"Every woman loves him. But—but we must protect her. In the Baroness Felsberg and the Princess Ludwig she already has warm and powerful friends. And I like her. We must do what we can for her."

The city already had taken on the gala air attendant on the Court Ball. All the world, as the world goes, of Nassau-Cassel was there, and grave historians may devote pages to it. There were German and English and Austrian royalties, and Russian and French, English and American diplomats; and there was the Duchess Amelia of Saxe-Magdeburg, whom it was the intention of the Government to betroth to the Crown Prince. Politics and all else were forgotten, even the old King, morose and ill in his apartments. There were, among other personages, the old Minister, Von Mark, Count of Rothan, splendid with many orders, and from whose mobile countenance there escaped no hint of affairs of State; there was the Prince Carl of Dornach, a debonair and smiling gallant; and the Princess Ludwig, mother of Frederick, heir-apparent, a melancholy figure in all that gaiety; there was the Earl of Strathers, who in a single night was said to have lost a fortune at baccarat; a French pretender, and an Italian prince royal; and an actress, Madame Elizabeth, whom all Germany idolized. In this glow of lights, of uniforms and orders, of shining shoulders and jewels, of music and beautiful women, there was nothing or no one more regal than the Countess Nathalie. She supported well the undisputed fame of the women of her race

for beauty, grace and wit. How insignificant the fat, stupid-faced Amelia of Saxe-Magdeburg seemed in comparison! And when the Crown Prince himself, often dancing with the Duchess Amelia, took out the Countess, she seemed the Duchess.

Von Hersch noticed that they were talking earnestly, and others noticed. But soon she was back near Lady Welhampton, the British Minister's wife, and the Baroness Roland. The Prince of Dornach was pleased to approach. Did Nathalie snub him? No, not at all. She was even cordial. Was this actress, this woman of the world, indeed the Little Countess Nathalie?

"A very pretty pair, indeed," quoth Carl.

"Pray not so pretty as a well-turned compliment," said Nathalie, looking at him and through him.

"How ready you are," Carl went on. "And modern women are so clever! They marry husbands and carry on politics. I know a half-dozen cases in Germany."

"The men should be so intelligent and patriotic," retorted Nathalie, "that they do not require the services of our sex as an educating force."

"But really, you know, it's odd. Now, you know I happened on the König Strasse the other evening rather late, when—you mustn't whisper this—whom should I pass but a certain young lady under the escort of the Prince's man, Conrad."

Carl would have been stretched on the floor then and there—the atrocious cad—but a better fencer than Von Hersch had the matter in hand.

"Oh, Prince," said the Baroness Roland, her face apparently alight with laughter, "how dull of you! I recognized you at once. The other night after the play I wanted to walk—needing the exercise—and at the carriage door I saw the Prince passing with Conrad, and he was good enough to let the man walk home with me." The Baroness was old enough to say this.

But Nathalie, like a very iceberg, cool and apparently unconcerned, was

watching the scene about her. "Was this indeed Von Hersch's little sister? Was the horror of scandal to touch her?" thought the kind-hearted Baroness.

The Crown Prince that night never had seemed more a prince of the Dillzallern line. He seemed older, different, more concerned. And with princely indifference he was walking over the trap of which he was aware. For this night Von Mark, Count of Rothan, was to show his power dramatically. All the world of Nassau-Cassel should see it, and fear. In the glow of power and splendor the Crown Prince was to be arrested as a rebel and seditionist. This was to be the first move; then would come the trial, then the removal from the succession, and then the crushing by the military of rioter and socialist. It was dramatic, it was splendid, as Von Mark, Count of Rothan, had prepared it.

Leopold had ended a dance with the Baroness Felsberg, when Von Muench, Constable of Dreibaden, placed his hand on His Highness's shoulder.

"Your Highness is under arrest, by His Majesty's orders."

"On what charge?" asked the Prince.

"Sedition."

"I submit to His Majesty's order, because he is my father and my king."

The room in an instant was in an uproar. Officers rushed toward the two. The Prince waved them back.

"By His Majesty's order," he said.

Then some official was seen to rush hurriedly across the room and to say something to Von Muench and to the Prince, who reeled as if about to fall, and then, with visible effort, straightened himself. The constable at the same moment, his manner completely changed, made a low obeisance.

Instantly, as such things will go, the rumor slipped through the great hall:

"The King is dead."

"Dead?"

"Yes, apoplexy, fifteen minutes ago."

"The King is dead!"

Then with a mighty roll and with wonderful effect on that scene after the music and frivolity, the words went out from a thousand throats in a sort of wail. For who knew what might happen in Nassau-Cassel?

"The King is dead!"

And then, with a note of fear, a note of hope:

"Long live the King!"

It rang through the mighty hall and seemed to swell into the street, where already the excited populace had taken up the cry, "The King is dead!"

"Long live Leopold Fifth."

The Prince, or Leopold Fifth, had bowed and gone out hurriedly. In the hall was the utmost confusion.

"What can we expect?"

"Death thwarted Von Mark."

Out of the confusion the Count Von Hersch at last succeeded in finding his carriage. As they drove home Nathalie's head sought her brother's shoulder, and she sobbed as if her heart would break.

"Don't be frightened, child," her mother said. "We have seen history to-night." They indeed had; but neither the mother nor the brother suspected what had been said between Leopold and Nathalie in the dance.

All that night the watch, crying the hours, as was the ancient custom, added to the o'clock:

"Three o'clock. Leopold Fourth is dead. God prosper His Majesty Leopold Fifth."

Death had brought a turn to the drama beyond any human planning. The morning came with the blackness of heavy rain, like a pall for Leopold IV., that fell over men's spirits the heavier after yesterday's gaiety.

Would the new King, once so light a roisterer, be able to cope with his difficulties? What would the morrow bring forth? But the morrow came, and another morrow, and Leopold IV. lay in state in the Minster of Dreibaden, as was the custom with the

dead Dützallerns. The people passed in and looked at his poor, wasted face and figure, and passed out to meet new rumors. The time of the funeral passed. The new King was kept constantly with his Ministers, only sometimes of an afternoon riding in Dützallern Forest, and they said, "The burden is his," for he looked haggard and worn.

And, indeed, no ruler ever ascended a throne more beset with difficulties than did Leopold V. None ever applied himself to his problems with such tireless labor. He was everywhere—now laboring in his cabinet; now with only two attendants, and scorning the assassin, among the rioting miners of the Odenwald; now placating a noble or a great owner, and again arranging the niceties of the relations of Nassau-Cassel to the other German States. The socialists and the labor leaders at first hailed him as a savior, and he had to mark sharply how far they should go: "Beyond that line the soldiers." The old nobles, who feared for their privileges, understood from the first that here was a case of King and State; that they, too, should go so far, and no farther. Men wondered at this new Dützallern, who, after a century of weak men, showed the strength of the old race—a young man who, out of the irregularities of youth, suddenly emerged a King. The Emperor on their first meeting after the old King's death embraced him, yet perhaps fearing this cousin a little, remembering the old days when a King of Nassau-Cassel had dictated terms to a Hohenzöllern, Elector of Brandenburg. Out of the weakling Princes of Southern Ger-

many there seemed to have arisen a man of strength and will.

They say that when the young King, passionate with grief, was leaving the death chamber of Leopold IV., he met in the outer room the Count of Rothan.

"I came to put my resignation in Your Majesty's hands."

"Von Mark," said the King, gently, for grief had chastened him, "we have been enemies, bitter enemies. We have differed on many subjects. Now that, by God's will, the power is in my hands, I know, what I knew before, that you are an honest man, and the service of honest men I need."

"I thank Your Majesty."

"Thank not me, but your own nature. You shall be, for the present, as you are. But remember, I am the King."

The Liberals, who expected all that was impossible, were scandalized at this. But the King was immovable; and from the hour of that meeting he had no better—for no better trained—nor more devoted servant than the Count of Rothan.

But we are turning to history—to a further part of the career of the Prince whom his admirers, remembering Shakespeare's delightful boy Prince, have styled the new Prince Hal.

The sweet, womanish and womanly *Kate* of this Prince Hal's story is she whom you know as the Countess Nathalie. His story and hers are the romance of Leopold's history. The night of that now famous Court Ball at Dreibaden the Prince won the promise of the lady who now shares the throne of this modern, reasonable King.



CONSCIENTIOUS

"JUST for fun, my dear, tell us how many men you are engaged to."

"No, papa, I cannot. If it were only one I wouldn't mind, but it wouldn't be fair to violate so many confidences."

A SOCIAL COINCIDENCE

WHEN I was ten and she was six we played at being wed,
 And started light housekeeping in a corner of the shed
 That harbored tools and kindling wood—but childhood made it seem
 A veritable palace filled with elegance supreme.

Her mother used to say she liked to have her play with me,
 Because we always managed with each other to agree;
 And I was heir to Lynnhurst, while her father tilled the soil—
 But not a thought of what this meant our playdays came to spoil.

When I was twenty, she sixteen, Dame Fortune fixed it so
 That she was rich and I was poor—the way of life, you know;
 And though our hearts were just as close as loving hearts can be,
 Her mother bade her never speak nor write a word to me.

Another decade now has passed—what Fortune once denied
 I've wrested from her, inch by inch, and something more beside;
 And now her mother smiles on me, as strange as it may seem,
 And says our marriage will fulfil her very dearest dream.

Of course, I'd not insinuate, or even hint, you know,
 But that this order of affairs just happens to be so;
 And yet it seems peculiar—has it not occurred to you?—
 How often, when the mothers smile, Dame Fortune's smiling, too!

WALLACE DUNBAR VINCENT.



FEMININE PRODIGALITY

ISAACS (*at a Summer hotel*)—Repecca! Rachel! Leah! Come right in
 here. Vat for I pay feefy tollars der veek for rooms if you vhas going to
 lif on der veranda?



AS FREQUENTLY NOTED

LITTLE ELMER (*who has an inquiring mind*)—Papa, what is a degenerate?

PROFESSOR BROADHEAD—A degenerate, my son, is a person who had a grandfather.

THE SAD CASE OF BARBARA

THE shade of a woman perched on a cloud
With a grim, sardonic smile,
And ever anon it sighed aloud
In a melancholy style.

Then a gentleman spirit chanced that way,
And he stopped and spoke; quoth he:
"Oh, tell me thy trouble, sad spirit, pray,
And mention thy name to me."

"'Twas Barbara Frietchie, sir," she said,
"I dwelt in Fredericktown,
And before the dramas and burlesques came
I had quite some renown."

Then the gentleman spirit cried, "'Tis she!
'Tis the maid I praised in song!
For I am the shade of the great John G.
Poor girl! Have they done thee wrong?"

At this, she took from beneath her wing
A newspaper soiled with age,
And she groaned aloud, like a stricken thing,
As she turned to the public's page.

"Oh, see what these letters say, good sir!
With your storied verse they deal.
Ah, see how many pens bestir
To shatter your great ideal!

"They say that my flag was the Stripes and Stars
That 'twas only a chance-found rag;
That it bore the Southern starred cross-bars;
That I never had a flag.

"That Jackson rode on a charger gray,
With many a graceful prance;
That he marched afoot on that fateful day;
That he came in an ambulance.

"That he raised his hat, my flag to greet;
That he ordered the flag shot down;
That his men all marched through another street
On the other side of the town.

"That I was dead when his troops marched by;
That a child I was—quite small;
That my age was ninety-six, or nigh;
That I never lived at all.

"Poet! Thou knowest I'm sorely racked,
So tell me, ere I scream,
Did your poem record an actual fact,
Or was it a mere 'pipe-dream?'"

The eyes of the poet's shade grew wild,
As he sank on a cloudy shelf,
And he sobbed, "I cannot tell thee, child!
They have mixed me up myself."

S. M. BRENNER.



BLUES

SHE walked restlessly about the room, trailing her filmy white gown after her, then stopped at the window, parted the curtains and looked out. The backs of the houses on the next street were covered with ivy, and presented a wall of living green, through which a light breeze sent long, tremulous waves as the wind does when it sweeps over a field of grain. The sky was a dim, sad blue and the sunlight like pale gold.

A Thing, nameless, unutterable, but sadder than death itself, was in the air, and crept along her shrinking nerves. She turned back into the room again. Ah, yes! she knew now. It was the Thing one heard in the moan of the sea and felt when one looked upon dead faces. It was the stress and pain and unceasing heartache of the world.

A little gasping moan escaped her. It was all so gray, so pointless, so—No wonder so many ended it!

Yet—well, even that seemed scarcely worth the trouble!

And it always came back to the same thing. If through one's tears one saw something bright and lovely, and picked it up, thinking it a joy, it turned into a dull sorrow in one's hands.

Love? An ecstasy that thrilled through the heart and died away in mournful cadences. Ambition? As futile as the work of the ant that toils along with its burden until, with a fillip of the finger, someone sends it flying through space. Goodness? Wherefore? Who craves the cold solitude of the mountain heights where Goodness dwells?

Oh! that the Great Someone would give that fillip of the finger that would end it for her!

There was a shaking heap of white on the divan. And only a stifled sob and the pert ticking of the little French clock on the mantel broke the breathless stillness of the room.

FRANCES WILSON.

THE ONE IN THE WORLD

By Charles Stokes Wayne

THAT Whyte paid his dinner call within three days after the dinner instead of waiting until the last day of the regulation period, or forgetting it altogether, was in itself significant. Whyte, as a rule, was disgracefully lax in matters of this kind, and Mrs. Duplessis was not a little perplexed by his sudden reformation.

"I want to thank you," he said, before he had been in the drawing-room five minutes, "for letting me take Mrs. Glynn in to dinner the other night."

"Isn't she charming?" Mrs. Duplessis hastened to ask.

"She's more than that," returned the caller; "she's what I should describe as unsettling. I'm in love with her."

Mrs. Duplessis laughed. The idea of Whyte being in love seemed too utterly ridiculous to be considered seriously. Besides, Mrs. Glynn had a husband to whom she was devoted, and men do not usually go about confessing their ardor for married women. Had Whyte really been in love, he would not, she argued, have ventured such an assertion.

This, however, was where Mrs. Duplessis made her mistake.

Had she taken him at his word she need have been perplexed no longer. Whyte really was in love, though at the moment he would scarcely admit it to himself. It was for that reason that he came out so boldly with the statement, hoping by this means to make a laughing matter of it. Yet it was because he wanted to talk of Mrs. Glynn that he had made haste to pay his dinner call. He had even

hoped that Mrs. Glynn might possibly be paying hers at the same time, which would give him another glimpse of her.

Whyte, as Mrs. Duplessis knew, was not impressionable. He had passed the thirty-five-year mark and he had seen much of the world. His temperament was phlegmatic. He cared nothing for society. At times he appeared to be little short of stupid, and his silence in company was often hard to condone. He was probably the most difficult man to entertain in all her acquaintance.

Therefore, the idea of his being seriously enamored of her friend never for a moment suggested itself to her. As a matter of fact, Whyte had gone to the dinner-party under protest. He was depressed to the verge of melancholy, and, so far as ideas for conversation were concerned, his brain seemed a vacuum. When he learned that he was to take in a woman of whom he had never so much as heard, he felt his organs of speech slowly, but surely, paralyze. His depression deepened. If, at that juncture, he could have escaped, he would have gone with giant strides.

And then, to be lifted buoyantly out of the depths into an atmosphere of spirited banter, to find his mind suddenly keen and his words coming faster than his tongue could utter them—all because of a magnetic congeniality that he had never before experienced and certainly could not have hoped for—was such a welcome surprise that he lost sight of everyone at the table save this wonderfully attractive woman at his left hand, whose beauty grew upon him as he

gazed at her, and whose voice possessed for him all the charm of the Lorelei.

When Whyte awoke on the morning following Mrs. Duplessis's dinner, Mrs. Glynn was his first recurrent thought. Her image was very clear in his mind's eye. He could even see the delicate beauty of her hands, with their blue veins and their pinkly polished nails. The honesty of her long-lashed eyes and the winsomeness of her red-lipped mouth were the most vivid of memories.

Even her words came back to him, and the tones of their utterance. He began to wonder if anyone had noticed how absorbed he had become in her at the table, and he asked himself whether her husband could have observed his infatuation. He had scarcely seen her husband. He was under the impression, however, that he was a large, handsome man, with rather a severe expression—a man evidently considerably her senior.

He wondered whether he was of a jealous disposition, and whether it was possible that he could have been annoyed or angered by the attention his wife had received. Whyte thought that if *he* had a wife he should like to have her admired. After all, he argued, it is merely a matter of confidence. If he has implicit faith in her, to see her prove attractive to other men could not but please him. If he doubts her—then it is another matter.

At his office that day Mrs. Glynn persisted in coming in between him and his briefs, and once, in court, when he was arguing before the most austere of judges, she got so mixed up with his argument that he came within an ace of losing his case.

That evening he went to the theatre, but he lost the thread of the plot in thinking of her and went home after the end of the second act.

When he should see her again, if ever, he did not know. Assuredly, he could not call upon her, and there was not one chance in a hundred that he would meet her out, since he had,

of late years, given up society almost altogether.

He became so unsettled by continuous thinking of her that he began to wish to forget her. But the more he wished and the more he struggled, the more incessant became his recollections and his longings.

It was while in this mood that, on the third day after the dinner-party, he called on Mrs. Duplessis. He hoped against hope that he might meet her there, but he found himself the only caller, and he went away, despondent, if not discouraged.

The next day an idea suggested itself to him. He recalled having spoken to her of a book that dealt with a psychological problem they had discussed. He sent his office-boy out for a copy and wrote a note, which he enclosed in it. His first intention was to send the volume solely with the object of getting a word from her in acknowledgment, but, with his pen in hand, he grew bolder. He suggested a luncheon at the Savarin and a visit to the Spring exhibition of the Academy of Design afterward.

For twenty-four hours he lived on hope. Then the telephone bell sounded hope's death-knell.

"Thank you ever so much for the book—" it was her voice; he recognized it instantly—"but what must you think of me to imagine that I would lunch with you? Besides, it was very reckless of you to send such a note to me. What do you suppose would have happened had Mr. Glynn been here when it came?"

Whyte stammered his apologies. He hoped she was not angry. He really hardly expected her to accept, and—*and*—then he said "Good-bye," and hung up the receiver. A minute later he could have boxed his own ears. Why had he not gone on talking? Why had he not begged her to let him see her somewhere? If she could not lunch with him, could she not tell him when she would walk down the Avenue, for instance? And then he could meet her—by chance. Certainly, Mr. Glynn could find no

harm in that. He cursed his own stupidity and bore the consequences as a merited punishment.

Nevertheless, there was for him just a grain of consolation in her few words. Indefinite as it was, there was certainly an understanding between them—they had been in danger together, and danger, too, from the man who was her husband, and—he felt sure of it now—his enemy. Glynn *had* noticed, then; and he had probably called his wife to book, after the dinner-party. Otherwise, why, seeing the note, should he blame her, since it was sent uninvited?

Whyte went over the matter again and again. He had not seen her; he wondered if he ever would see her; but there was no denying the fact that they were now on a plane of intimacy altogether out of proportion to the length of their acquaintance. He was rather at a loss to account for it, save on the old and somewhat threadbare theory of affinities; and in this idea he found a grateful solace.

The more he thought of her refusal to lunch with him the more his admiration for her grew. He respected her for her fidelity to what she considered her duty as a wife, and then he began to realize that, after all, it was not her beauty that had ensnared him, but her wholesome, honest, frank womanliness.

He saw, now, that his regard for her was quite as much because of her mental and spiritual charms as her physical pulchritude, that that which he most desired was the exhilaration induced simply by her presence and her conversation.

His first effort to obtain this having met with failure, he cast about for some other means to accomplish it, and hit upon the plan of making Mrs. Duplessis serve him in this emergency. He wrote that lady a note saying that he had a box for the theatre on the following Friday night, and begging her to make up a party for him, of which Mr. and Mrs. Glynn should be two.

Mrs. Duplessis fell into the scheme most charmingly and unsuspectingly;

and Whyte ordered the supper that was to follow at Sherry's with a prodigality born of a desire to shower gifts at the feet of his enchantress. That he could not send her jewels, or even flowers, was to him a matter of continual vexation, his constant impulse being to do something for her pleasure.

The first act was half over before the Glynn's arrived, and when Whyte heard her voice at the box door, a wave of joy, not unmixed with embarrassment, swept over him. As he took her hand, the perspiration came out in beads on his temples, and for a moment he stood speechless. Then he found himself stammering such commonplaces as: "Awfully glad to see you again!" and "So good of you to come!"

He shook Glynn's hand warmly, but noted no cordiality in return, and a minute or two later, when he was about to drop into a chair behind Mrs. Glynn, he was not a little vexed at seeing Glynn take the place from under his very hand. Later in the evening, thanks to Mrs. Duplessis, who beckoned Glynn to her side, Whyte was able to draw his chair to Mrs. Glynn's elbow.

"What do you think of my idea?" he asked.

"It *was* yours, then?" she replied; "I suspected it."

"Why?"

"I don't know—intuition, probably."

"Do you believe that if one person thinks constantly of another, the other is ever conscious of it?"

"There is some such theory. I have read that such cases have been known."

"Your intuition is an instance," he said; "*you* have not been out of my thoughts since Mrs. Duplessis's dinner."

He saw her color come and go.

"Don't you regard it as very unwise to think so much on one subject?" she asked. "Besides, if the theory holds good, it is not fair to me—you may be distracting me from other matters that demand my attention."

"Have I distracted you?"

"No, not that I remember," she answered, thoughtfully; "but there is always the danger, you know."

"But I'm not going to write you any more notes."

"It was very unkind of you to write the first," she went on; "it might have been a very serious matter."

"But surely," he protested, "your husband would not have held you responsible for my temerity?"

"You don't know my husband. He would have said that I must have encouraged you."

"But—but you didn't."

"What does it matter whether I did or not, if he thought that I did?"

"I fancied that he would not be at home."

"Fortunately, your fancy was correct. I burned the note instantly."

"But I wanted to see you so much! I wanted to talk with you. My proposition may have been too bold, but I thought it justified by the perfectly respectful character of my wish."

"I have no doubt that what you say is true; still, you cannot expect husbands to look at such matters—in these days, at all events—in the same light."

"And I am never to see you, then, except in a crowd, like this?"

"I suppose not. I can hardly ask you to call on me. If Mr. Glynn should ask you, that would be another matter."

"But *he* is not likely to ask me!"

She laughed lightly. "I fear he is not," she said.

"And you—" Whyte persisted, "you do not care?"

"I am a wife," she answered, "and my duty is to my husband."

During the next two months, though Whyte saw practically nothing of Mrs. Glynn, his infatuation did not abate in the least. Once he passed her in a hansom on the Avenue, and once he met her with a woman friend, getting off an elevated train. Each meeting simply added to his unrest, and as time went on he became more and more silent and *distract*,

going nowhere and virtually seeing nobody.

He usually dined alone at a hotel restaurant, rather than at his club, preferring the company of his thoughts to that of idle acquaintances. At length, however, having taken himself, metaphorically, by the throat and convinced himself that his passion was as hopeless as it was wicked, he decided that his recovery could only be accomplished by a persistent course of diversion, and to this he determined to devote his time and energy.

That night he dined at his club, for the first time in weeks, with his old friend Van Ingen across the table. He prefaced his dinner with a cocktail, and he ordered a bottle of champagne to drink to his new resolve.

"By the way, old man," said Van Ingen, a little, florid-faced fellow, with dark, curling hair, "where the devil did you ever meet the Glynn?"

Whyte, who had his glass half-way to his lips, spilled part of its contents on his shirt bosom and carried it unsteadily back to the table damask.

"I—I—" he began, coloring in spite of himself, "I met them at a dinner-party."

"Fine woman, Mrs. Glynn," Van Ingen went on; "I called there the other night, and she happened to mention your name."

Whyte struggled hard to conceal his interest. He was longing to ask what she had said, but he curbed his desire.

"I found her very charming," he said, instead.

"It's a pity she has such a grouch of a husband," Van Ingen continued. "I can't stand a man who finds fault with his wife in public. If he must correct her, the least he can do is to reserve the correction for the privacy of a tête-à-tête."

"I didn't know—" Whyte began.

"Oh, yes; calls her down on all occasions. I wonder if she is happy with him?"

"I'm sure I hope so," said Whyte, a little doubtfully. He was not by any means sure that he did hope so.

"He's a good fellow at heart, I

imagine," Van Ingen rattled on, "but—well—if she knew all that I know, I wonder how long she would put up with his strictures?"

"Do you mean that he is unfaithful to her?"

"I didn't say so."

"Well—but——"

"Well, I'll bet he doesn't talk to a certain little girl I know of in the same tone that he does to Mrs. Glynn! That's all."

Whyte made no reply. His indignation had risen to a point that was uncomfortable. His fingers itched to punish this most unappreciative of husbands. It was for such a man as this that she prated of "wifely duty!"

Van Ingen drained his glass.

"Do you realize that Summer is here?" he asked.

"It has been quite warm to-day."

"The Glynn's leave town next week. They have taken a cottage at Bantry."

"That's on Long Island, isn't it?"

"Yes; rather a quaint old place. They invited me down to spend Sunday."

When Whyte reached his rooms that night he realized that his first effort at diversion had been an utter failure.

The next day he looked up Bantry in the gazetteer. He had heard of it often enough, but he had never been there, and his notions of the place were very hazy.

What the gazetteer told him was this: "—, a post-village in Bantry township, Suffolk County, N. Y., on Bantry Bay, an inlet of the Atlantic Ocean; ninety miles E. by S. of New York City and about ten miles north of Brownsville, L. I. It is the eastern terminus of a branch of the Long Island Railroad, and has four churches, many stately residences, a newspaper office, a bank, a good hotel and a cotton factory. Pop. about 2,000."

"A good hotel," repeated Whyte, cheerfully; "what is to prevent my taking a room at the 'good hotel' for the Summer months?"

Thereupon he wrote a letter, re-

questing that accommodations be reserved for him from a date that he named; and this done, he felt happier than at any time since his little box-party and its succeeding supper.

He arrived at the hotel on a Saturday evening. It happened that it was the occasion of the first "hop" of the season, and the cottagers attended in force.

Whyte got into his evening clothes and took up a position on the piazza where he could command a view of the arrivals.

"She'll be here, of course," he meditated, as he cut off the end of a cigar. He noted that he was nervous. His hands were cold, and he was too restless to stop long in one position. He strolled into the bar and had a pony of cognac. When he came out she was standing in the doorway of the main entrance and Van Ingen was with her.

His heart-beats attained a livelier tempo as he gazed at her for a moment, unobserved. Her wrap had partly fallen from her bare shoulders, which gleamed pale as ivory under the electric light. Her gown was of white, simply made, and a great red rose blushed above her corsage.

For months Whyte had been picturing her to himself daily, but the reality eclipsed the imaginative portrait.

He had meant to appear surprised at seeing her, but the presence of Van Ingen, who had told him her plans for the Summer, forbade this subterfuge.

"This is a pleasure!" he said, stepping forward.

At the sound of his voice she turned, a little startled, but her color did not change.

"You here—of all people!" she exclaimed. "What in the world ever brought you to Bantry?"

"You" was on the tip of his tongue to answer, but Van Ingen was shaking his hand at the moment, and he said, simply: "The day was hot in town, and Bantry has a reputation for cool sea breezes."

"Don't you believe him," put in

Van Ingen; "I told him you people had taken a cottage here, and I'm willing to wager a case of wine it was that which attracted him."

"That would be very complimentary, I'm sure," returned Mrs. Glynn, laughing. "Mr. Glynn has gone to speak to the manager a moment; I'm sure he'll be glad to see you."

Van Ingen turned his head away to look at a tall girl in gray and spangles who had just come in.

"And you?" Whyte whispered.

"I am not so sure," she answered.

"He can't refuse to let you give me one dance to-night, can he?"

"He may."

"I shall ask him, at all events."

Van Ingen turned suddenly.

"Here, what are you two chatting about?" he exclaimed, jocularly. "I'll have to tell Dick; he left his wife in my care."

When Glynn returned a moment later Whyte was surprised by an approach to cordiality that he had not dared expect.

"I've asked Mrs. Glynn for a waltz," he said, "if you don't mind."

"Mind?" the husband repeated.

"Certainly not."

"The first is mine, you know," Van Ingen protested.

"No," she said, "the first is Dick's, yours is the second and Mr. Whyte may have the third."

The music had not begun for the dance allotted him when Whyte approached her.

"Aren't you warm?" he asked.

"Suppose we take a stroll outside? I'll get your wrap."

When he had fetched it they stepped out on the piazza.

"It was very bold of me to ask you for a waltz," he said, with a smile.

"Why bold?"

"Because," he answered, "I can't dance a step."

"You can't?"

"No; that is to say, I haven't danced in years, and I've sworn never to begin again."

"But—"

"We'll stop out here until it is over."

"But Mr. Glynn will—"

"You can tell him the heat made you faint, and you needed the air. Besides, I want to talk to you. I've been starving for a talk with you ever since March, at Mrs. Duplessis's dinner. That box-party and supper were by no means satisfactory. They simply whetted my appetite."

"You are certainly very flattering, but I do not care for such broad compliments. The more delicate they are the more sincere they seem."

"I am sincerity itself," Whyte protested. "I wish you would believe me."

"I really can't see," Mrs. Glynn objected, "what is to be gained by my believing you."

"Isn't an honest friendship of any value, then?"

"I must confess," she answered, "that I have very little faith in platonics. A woman may entertain a perfectly placid, unromantic regard for a man, but the man invariably refuses to let matters rest there."

"Try me—and see!"

"Ah, but in my case," she added, hastily, "there is a third person to be considered, and the third person believes in platonics even less than I do."

Could it be possible, Whyte asked himself, that he should care so much for this woman—be so completely enslaved by the charm of her personality—and yet awaken in her no answering sentiment? Was this the explanation of her attitude toward him, or was it that she was battling against impulse for the sake of duty? He tried to find some scintilla of evidence in favor of the latter view, but he had to confess to himself that there was nothing upon which to lay hold for confirmation.

"You are not like other women," he began, but she interrupted him:

"Oh, please don't!" she said.

"Every man says that to every woman he fancies. My husband said it to me the second time we met."

"I don't care who said it before, or who may say it again," he persisted, just a little annoyed; "I am not a

child. I've seen many women; I've talked to many women; I might say, I suppose, that I have loved many women, after a fashion; but I never before met one whose presence acted on me as yours does, or who understood me and responded to me as you did and do, though you insist on trying to make me believe the contrary."

"You have no right to say that."

"I have every right, because it is the truth, and yet I suppose it would have been wiser to have hidden all this. It would have been wiser had I never sent you that book and never suggested that meeting. That was where I revealed the fact that you had made an impression upon me, and from that moment our relations were not the same. Before that you were natural, unrestrained; you talked to me as you would to any man you had met, and—yes, I do not think it is conceited to say—and liked. Since that, however, you have apparently been constantly upon your guard. I understand your position perfectly. If you were unmarried, it is not impossible you might have welcomed the regard which I do not hesitate to confess I have for you. As you are married, you consider it disloyal even to admit that such a regard exists. And these sentiments, for which I honor you, while they make my part in the affair all the harder, only increase my admiration."

Whyte spoke rapidly, and with a fervor that for him was unusual.

"If I had only met you before," he went on, "when I could have battled for you on even terms, how I should have fought to win you!"

"Really, Mr. Whyte," Mrs. Glynn interposed, "I cannot listen to you. It is not right—it is not fair."

"And yet," he continued, "I mean to be most respectful. I really do—and I am. I will tell you now that I came down here intending to take a room at this hotel for the Summer, simply to be near you. But I see that my presence makes you uncomfortable. For that reason I am not coming any more. As soon as I can ar-

range matters I shall go abroad. But before I go I want you to make me a promise. I want you to give me your word that, should any great unhappiness come into your life—any unhappiness that your husband cannot soothe—you will send for me, or—come to me. As long as I live it will be in the hope that in such an event—which, for your sake, I trust will never come—I may be able to serve you."

She laughed, a trifle grimly.

"Such a thing is not likely," she answered, "but if it will please you, I'll promise."

He took a card from his pocket and scribbled a line on it in pencil.

"That address will always find me," he said.

She folded the card and thrust it inside her glove.

When they returned to the ball-room the waltz was over and a square dance had begun.

Late in September Whyte sat in front of the *Switzerhof* at Lucerne with a letter in his hand. He had dawdled through the Summer among the Italian lakes, and now he was making his way back to Paris for a week, and then on to Southampton to take the steamer home.

His outing had not been altogether a success. He had been unable to forget, and remembering had not added to his peace of mind. Every time he saw the moon rise he longed for one woman to see it with him. Every book that he read lost half its charm in that *she* was not there to discuss it. The beautiful Italian gardens were but so many invitations to romantic rambles with one who was three thousand miles away.

All Summer he had had no word of her until now, when Van Ingen's letter had brought him tidings that set him to pondering.

He re-read the page for the fourth time. "I've been down to Bantry several times this Summer, and have seen a great deal of the Glynn's. Poor woman! It's shameful how Dick deceives her. I have been looking into his little affairs, and inside of a week

or so I shall have the evidence that will free her—if she wishes to be freed. At all events, I mean to let her know."

Whyte realized that the proof of her husband's perfidy would be a great blow to her. He knew that she honored Glynn and had faith in him. At one time she must have loved him. That she still loved him was not so certain. But whether she did or not, this would be very hard for her to bear. It would hurt her pride. There is no more pathetic thing on earth than disillusionment. It was cruel of Van Ingen to tell her. What business of his was it to interfere between man and wife?

He got up and walked across the road to the tree-bordered promenade that skirts the lake embankment.

Here he nervously paced to and fro for some minutes, his head bent forward, his thoughts busy.

Then he recrossed the road and entered the hotel.

"I want to send a cablegram. Get me a blank," he said to the porter.

When the bit of paper was brought, he sat down and wrote:

NICHOLAS VAN INGEN, UNICORN CLUB,
NEW YORK:

Don't let her know, I beg.

T. W.

And then he prayed heaven the message might be in time to save her the pain and ignominy of the threatened revelation.

"At least," he said to himself, "I have proved that my love for her is not altogether selfish. I would rather suffer an eternity than have this misery enter her life."

That night he took the train for Paris, and on the second day following sailed out of Southampton Harbor, homeward bound.

He was afraid to trust Van Ingen too far. If his cable had effected a temporary halt in his friend's plans, that was all he could expect. To cause him to give over altogether, it might be necessary to bring eloquence to bear, and he wished to be on hand to do his best when the time came.

The voyage was a rough one from

the start. Headwinds and heavy seas were the rule, and there were times when the decks were almost constantly under water. On the fourth day out, Whyte was tossed down the steps of the companionway by a sudden lurch of the ship, and lay unconscious in his berth from that time until the liner was made fast at the Hoboken docks.

The ship's doctor called it "concussion of the brain." Whatever it was, delirium and fever followed, and Whyte spent the ensuing two months in a hospital.

With the return of his reason he begged to be taken to his apartments in the Wycherly, and as soon as his condition appeared sufficiently improved his wishes were obeyed. Then he sent for his own physician, and he, in turn, sent for a trained nurse. The next day, physician and nurse found that the excitement and exertion of leaving the hospital had brought on a relapse, and for a week the sick man raved in delirium again.

During this period he argued at times, with much force and no little semblance of reason, that a certain "she" must not be told something that it would only bring misery upon her to hear. At other times he avowed a consuming passion for a person whom he seemed to see standing at the foot of his bed, and to whom he made the most convincing protestations of life-long fidelity.

His convalescence was slow and hazardous.

"I've had a pretty serious time of it, nurse, haven't I?" he observed, one morning; "but I'm getting on all right now! I feel quite strong to-day, and my head is perfectly clear."

"I'm glad of that, sir," replied the nurse. "I'll have good news for Mr. Van Ingen when he calls."

"Ah, yes, Van Ingen. Is he coming to-day?"

"Yes, sir. He's been here every day."

"By the way, nurse, I expect a lot of people have left cards, haven't they? Suppose you let me look them over."

"Are you quite sure you're able?"

"Oh, quite; it will do me good!"

The man brought him a silver tray of broad diameter, heaped high with pasteboards, and placed it on the bed beside him.

Whyte, with some effort, raised himself on one elbow and began turning over the cards rather hastily. Yes, his friends had certainly not forgotten him. There was a card from about everyone he knew, except—but no, he must have overlooked it; and then he began again, more slowly this time, taking them up one by one.

She had not called.

"Take them away," he said, petulantly; "they do tire me, after all."

Then he fell asleep and dreamed that she was beside him, telling him that she did not leave a card because she feared her husband might call and see it, and she did not want her husband to know. Her husband, she said, was very jealous indeed. And then she whispered that he had reason to be, for she loved another man more than she did him, and that other man was—and then he thought she kissed him, and heaven seemed to open to him as he folded her in his arms and cried out:

"My darling! At last!"

The cry awakened him and he started up in affright.

"Mr. Van Ingen has just called, sir," said the nurse; "he's in the other room, and he says he's going away this afternoon and would like to see you just a minute before going, if you're strong enough."

"Tell him to come in," said Whyte, absently, the dream still fresh in his mind and the memory of her kiss still upon his lips.

Van Ingen entered on tiptoe. He wore a fur-lined overcoat, and his face, contrasted with the pallor of the sick man's, seemed more rubicund than ever.

"Just a word with you, old chap," he said, in a half-whisper. "I wanted to tell you how glad I am that you're getting on so well—and—"

"You got my cable, I hope?" Whyte put in, seeing him hesitate.

"Oh, yes, got it all right, but just twenty-four hours too late. I'd told her the whole thing the day before. You should have seen her! She was glorious! She saw her lawyers the next morning, and there was no trouble about it at all. Went through with a hip, hip, hurrah! The decree was handed down last week."

Whyte sighed.

"Perhaps it was for the best," he murmured.

"For the best? Of course it was. He was a brute to her."

"She deserved a better man."

"And she's going to have a better man, next time!" said Van Ingen. "Congratulate me, old fellow," he added.

Whyte stared with wide eyes at the little red-faced object. A shadow crossed his features and his lips moved, but he did not speak.

"I'm afraid I'll have to ask you to leave him, sir," said the nurse; "he's still far from well, and any excitement might—"

"Oh, of course, of course!" and Van Ingen tiptoed out, looking back, apprehensively, as he reached the door.

The nurse saw him to the hallway, then hurried back to the patient's bedside.

Whyte was lying quite still, staring at the space that a minute before had been occupied by the thick-set form and ruddy face of his friend; but over his own face had come that grayness which is the unmistakable token of death.



AT VAUXHALL

THOSE were the days when George was King;
 Pleasure then went a-loitering—
 Patches and powder, wig and queue,
 Wit and beauty, were reigning, too.

Vauxhall echoed with merry song,
 Jest and laughter all day long;
 Many a waiting sedan-chair
 Stood for a famous beauty there.

Once, at the close of a stately fête,
 A blind old beldame at the gate
 Scolded fast at her link-boys slow,
 Lagging to watch the booths below.

Down the pathway came George the King—
 All the damsels low curtseying—
 Tripped a bit by the old dame's chair,
 Caught his stick in her high-piled hair.

"Take that monster out of my way!"
 Loud she screamed in a mad dismay;
 "Ugly beast! he's ruined my hair,
 Shattered the lacquer off my chair!"

Then there happened the strangest thing:
 Down on his knees dropped George the King—
 At least, so gay old Walpole writes,
 Modern Horace of London lights.

"Madam, your peace I crave," said he,
 "Only the blind may truly see!"
 Pleasure then went a-loitering—
 Those were the days when George was King.

CHARLOTTE BECKER.



MAIDENLY CONFIDENCE

HE—Two weeks ago, would you have believed it possible that we could be sitting here by the sea so close together and so much in love?

SHE—Oh, yes.

"But you didn't even know me then."

"No. But I knew myself."

THE SAME OLD PANTOMIME

By Burton Egbert Stevenson

SEE the girl—
No, not that one—
She of the blue eyes and curly
hair,
Over yonder,
Clad in the brown bathing-suit.

How her eyes sparkle and her lips
pout!
Mark the plump whiteness of her arm,
The dimple at the elbow,
And the pink little fingers
Which she holds out imploringly
To the dazzled youth beside her.

She is going to take a plunge,
And the surf is rather high to-day.
She gives a little shriek
As it curls about her dainty ankles.
She declares she never will dare to
venture
Into that seething torrent—
That she will die of fright.
She clutches at his arm,
And he turns red with joy.

He speaks to her encouragingly—
He is not large, nor strong,
Just an ordinary youth.
But he feels like a hero now.
He tells her there is no danger—
Is he not there to protect her?

She raises her blue eyes to his—
Oh, ye gods!
His brain begins to swim—
Perhaps he has water on the brain,
Else how could it swim?—
His heart is beating madly,
And he feels very warm internally.
But she is cool,
She is calm,
She knows the ropes.
So she presses to him,

She shows how much she trusts him,
She places her life in his keeping.
Instinctively his arm is about her
waist,
And they go down into the surf to-
gether.

But is she really frightened?
Not on your life.
She has been there many times be-
fore—
Many, many times.
She can outswim him two to one.
If there is any rescuing to be done,
She will be the rescuer.
But she is wise.
She knows she must appear a timid,
shrinking thing
If she would make his heart go pit-a-
pat.
She has tried it a hundred times
before,
With others,
And it has never failed,
For men's hearts are very much alike.

To-night,
Beneath the old arbor back of the
boathouse—
How well she knows the place,
And will happen upon it again by
accident—
He will tell her how he loves her,
How he yearns
To go through life protecting her
Even as he did this afternoon.
And her eyes will melt into his,
Her head will droop upon his shoulder,
She will breathe a little sigh
Of love and rest and uttermost con-
tent—
And he will feel,
With swelling breast,
That at last he has become a Man.

As she rests there
And listens to his fevered protestations,
His hopes and fears, and plans for all the future,
She decides that this time it shall be for keeps.

'Twere dangerous to dally longer,
For she was born in 1870—
Although the o in the family Bible
has been altered to a 6—
And she begins to feel
A-weary of it all.

She is ready to retire
And leave the field to other girls
Who have been rehearsing
The same old pantomime,
And who have already given her a point or two.

How can one win a race
Handicapped by the weight of thirty
Summers?

'Twere better to retire,
Become a matron, and go decently to seed.



ON THE LINKS

SHE is surpassing fair, and so
I linger still her face to see,
And oft I sigh, for well I know
She dreams of golf and not of me.
I seek to babble and be gay;
Her eye from mine no rapture drinks;
I cannot lure her thoughts away;
Her mind is ever on the links.

I brought a book; 'twas leathern bound;
I'd ever slighted it before;
Its pages yellow, yet profound,
Were filled with zoölogic lore.
"What creature, pray, do you like best?"
Quoth I. (My voice to pathos sinks.)
She smiles and says, "More than the rest,
I think I should prefer the lynx."

An hour we wandered through the grove;
I said that I'd her caddie be
If she would but consent to rove
A little while that way with me.
The birds sing loud. "What birds," I cry,
"Are sweetest to your ear?" The minx
Without a pause gives me reply:
"My favorite birds are bob-o-links."

And then I turned to literature.
My heart awoke to cynic glee,
For on that topic I was sure
Her thoughts by mine must guided be.
"What books most please your gentle taste?"
Her steadfast eye she never winks.
I'm vanquished. I retire in haste.
She simply answers, "Maeterlinck's."

PHILANDER JOHNSON.

RIVER GOSSIP

By Gertrude Wall

"GOOD-MORNING," she said, as she hoisted her sail and shipped anchor; "isn't this a lovely breeze?"

"Perfectly delightful," he answered, as he steamed up alongside. "I hope my smoke does not bother you?"

"Oh, not at all; but it does make such a difference when you use certain kinds of coal. Now, that *Williams* tug is the most disagreeable boat on the river. I had to get a new coat of paint the other week simply because of its carelessness. I do like to be neat, but it's a difficult matter when one's associates make you feel like a mud-scow after five minutes' conversation!"

"It must be most annoying," murmured the tug, making as little noise as possible.

"You seem rather out of breath this morning; is there anything the matter with your pipe?" asked the sloop.

"I am not quite sure, but I think not. You see, I hurried slightly to catch up to you before you had gotten under weigh."

"I am sure you are very kind! It must be such a nuisance for you to tack in this way. You are naturally so direct in all you do. But, you know, with me it is often necessary to reach places in a roundabout fashion. I don't suppose you can understand that," she said, archly.

"Not altogether," he replied, softly. "You have always been a beautiful mystery to me."

"Now you know," she added, hastily, "it is so delightful to have a constant change of scene; it's one

reason I can afford to keep so cheerful."

"I am often astonished to find you always so delightfully fresh and talkative," he replied, with admiration.

"Well, of course, it's partly my social training. Now, that big Boston schooner, the *Ellen Summerset*, that passes here so often, is the sombreest thing I ever saw. She is black, besides—I hope you won't feel hurt by my reference to your color. I don't object a particle to a black tug, I rather like it; but a schooner! and from Boston, too! I never could endure that boat. She is so proud of her size that nothing is good enough for her. For my part, I never did think that the amount one can carry inside is of the least consequence. Personally, speed is the only thing I care for, and of course that is one reason I am so partial to the yachts. I think it's perfectly disgraceful the way that *Summerset* associates with the *Williams* tug; they are together the whole blessed time. There they are now, under the bridge, and you can see for yourself how things are going. She has not an inch of paint on her starboard side on account of his attentions!"

"It seems a most reprehensible thing," answered the tug.

"Reprehensible? That hardly expresses it," fumed the sloop.

"I was talking to a Fulton Ferry boat the other day, and she said that a perfect scandal was brewing. She says they always slow up near her side of the bridge, and she distinctly heard him tell the *Summerset* that he preferred her to any coal scow on the river, and that, I am sure, was suffi-

ciently pointed! She will tell you herself that at first he had her on a tow-line yards long, while now he stays close alongside in full view of the whole river! Fulton Ferry calls it positively not respectable, only she used a much stronger term, like indecent, to show what she thought."

"I never felt any interest in the *Summerset* myself," answered the tug, "but I meant to ask you this morning, if you think—that is, could there be any possibility of your going as far as Albany this week?"

"Why, I really can't say; I hardly think so. You see, I am so fond of the excitement and bustle of this little spot around Governor's Island. Take care!" she cried, wrinkling her sail as she shifted about. "Oh, I had such a happy time during the Dewey celebration," she bubbled; "it was the event of my life. But where were you? I don't remember seeing you?"

"I had special work on hand," muttered the tug, mournfully, "and I only saw the yachts as they passed here."

"And they were such a ravishing sight," she gurgled. "My heart fairly stood still. I saw all of them personally afterward, and if it had not been for the poor *Shamrock*—well, I frankly confess I should not have had half as good a time, though the Howard Gould and Astor yachts, and in fact several others, were dis-

tinctly nice to me," and the waves about her bows took on a slight roseate hue.

The tug whistled with sudden vigor.

"Oh, my, you have such a strong voice!" she whimpered, with a little start, "and it comes so unexpectedly sometimes. If I only felt that the *Shamrock's* attentions were not the forced courtesy of a foreign guest," she went on, with a slight heave, "it would be such a comfort to me!"

"I hope you are not feeling any partiality for a vanquished foe," said the tug, severely. "I hope there is nothing un-American about you."

"Oh, no; but, after all, foreign blood counts."

"Well, as for that," he replied, somewhat mollified, "in a certain sense, perhaps it does; now I come to think of it, there is a strong strain of it in me, too. My machinery was imported, I believe, and my first owner came from England originally."

"Oh, indeed!" she answered, faintly.

"And if I may be permitted to say so without giving offense, would you—that is, have you—er—did you know that you are expected at our docks soon? I overheard my present owner saying that he had bought you."

"Oh, really!" she murmured. "This is so sudden!"



AD INFINITUM

POOR Mrs. Lyttle-Smithers-Long-
Bell-Jones-De Bilton-Bourn
Has passed away, and neighbors say
Her many husbands mourn.

While she through all eternity
Has but a single care—
Since marriages are made in heaven—
To break the record there!

EMILY McMANUS.

AMOUR PERDU

Par Paul Bonnetain

C'ETAIT à Singapoore au milieu de l'encombrement plein de couleur d'une des rues affairées.

"Oh! maman, vois donc . . . un matelot Français! . . . Comme il est pâle! . . ."

Et, du bout de son ombrelle, la jeune fille arrêta le cocher malais qui, pour éviter le rassemblement, prenait déjà sa gauche, à la mode anglaise.

"Diane! . . . Êtes-vous enfant!" gronda la duchesse. D'ailleurs également curieuse, la vieille dame braquait sa face à main sur le groupe bariolé de Javanais, de Chinois, de Birmans, de Siamois, de Battaks, au milieu desquels apparaissait un grand diable de marin, brun, sec et maigre, les cheveux ruisselants sur un front livide.

L'homme ainsi entouré défilait aux bras de deux policemen Sikhs dont l'énorme turban rouge blémis-sait son teint davantage, et grelot-tant, sinistre, affreux, psalmodiait à chaque gargoulette d'eau que l'on s'obstinait à vider sur son crâne, des: "Assez! merci!" . . . incompris de ses auditeurs.

Il résistait, refusait de se laisser entraîner à l'abri dans la case blanchie qui flambait, fulgurante, sous le soleil, entre des palmiers qui semblaient de métal.

"Un ivrogne, tout simplement!" déclara le consul assis dans la voiture, en face des deux femmes.

Le matelot entendit. D'un coup sec des épaules, il repoussa les policemen et s'avança entre les rangs des indigènes. Il ne titubait point, semblait plus pâle encore.

"Je ne suis pas saoul," cria-t-il, "je suis malade. . . ."

Tout à coup il recula, balbutiant, et pour se découvrir, porta sa main à sa tempe nue. A côté de la face gravement banale du fonctionnaire, il venait d'apercevoir relevant le store, une figure blonde et rose dont les yeux jeunes l'examinaient, très pitoyables. Puis, derrière surgissait une autre tête, de poupée peinte celle-là, comme endormie et dont le regard se cachait sous un binocle d'écaille. Il recula encore, le sang aux pommettes, sans pourtant baisser le regard; méchant, timide, fier, comme une bête battue qui n'oserait pas.

"Monsieur! . . . voulez-vous vous approcher, Monsieur?"

Doucement, la figure blonde l'appela, avec un sourire hésitant et bon de ses traits fins, de ses yeux bleus.

A pas lents, il revint, les paupières soudainement baissées.

"D'où êtes-vous?"

"D'Ajaccio," murmura-t-il. . . . "Bastiani Pierre, naufragé de l'Immaculée Conception, du port de Marseille"

Mais, déjà, le consul, l'ayant reconnu, expliquait sa présence à Singapoore. L'équipage du brick avait été rapatrié; seul cet homme, malade, phthisique, épuisé de privations, avait dû rester à l'hôpital. Rétabli maintenant, assez fort du moins pour partir, il attendait le passage d'un navire de guerre; toutefois s'il continuait à courir les cabarets, on ne le laisserait plus sortir.

Bastiani lui coupa la parole. Il n'avait point bronché au mot de phthisique mais se révoltait, avec une

indignation de méridional sobre, à l'accusation d'ivrognerie. Ses yeux, à présent hardis, ne quittaient pas la jeune fille, et il s'avavançait.

"Je n'ai pas bu! je n'ai pas bu!" répétait-il comme un enfant; "c'est le soleil! . . . je suis sorti tantôt, pour la première fois, avec un bérêt seulement. Ça m'a étourdi, mademoiselle. . . ."

Ses mèches, pleuraient sur son front, sa misère demandait justice, sa face farouche et belle, sa maigreur qu'étaient une pitié.

La jeune fille le contempla, tout émue, puis se détourna, gênée par cet œil cave dont la flamme, démentant la plainte du visage, la chauffait de ses reflets noirs. Elle se sentait rougir.

"Dites-moi, monsieur le consul, à quelle époque ce malheureux pourra-t-il rentrer en France?"

"Mon Dieu! mademoiselle, je ne sais pas. . . . Dans un mois, je pense, au passage du Vinh-Long. . . ."

"Comme c'est long! . . . Et il n'y aurait pas moyen de l'expédier par notre paquebot, demain?"

Le consul minauda, tâtonna, prit un air important . . . les réglemens . . . pas d'urgence . . . c'était très cher, ces passages. . . .

"Mais, puisqu'on vous dit qu'il est . . . malade! Voyons, si je vous en priais un peu? Nous paierons au besoin, n'est-ce pas, maman?"

La duchesse occupée à l'autre portière eut un "Sans oute" vague, et, se retournant:

"Partons-nous?"

Avec un sourire obséquieux, le fonctionnaire s'inclina, puis se pencha vers le marin:

"Viens au consulat ce soir, mon garçon. Tu prendras le paquebot!"

Et la voiture fila, laissant les Sikhs, la main au turban pour le salut militaire, et Bastiani, de l'Immaculée Conception du port de Marseille, extasié au milieu du trottoir, sous le soleil, dans le chemin rouge, devant la case blanchie à la chaux qui flam-bait, fulgurante, sur ses soubassements lie de vin, entre des palmes de métal.

II

Le *Djemnah*, son charbon embarqué, n'attendait plus que son pilote pour larguer ses amarres, et quitter l'ap-pontement de New-Harbour, quand Bastiani parut, se trainant, son bag-age sur le dos.

Moins pâle, moins débraillé que la veille, il avait un large col bleu très propre sur sa chemise de laine. Son regard chercha quelqu'un parmi les passagers penchés sur la lisse; puis, morne, se rabassa, et le matelot, ayant haussé les épaules, gagna l'avant, s'embarqua.

Dans l'encombrement des couloirs, il errait à pas lourds, son billet de réquisition à la main, et des gens se retournaient derrière lui, tant il sem-blait démolí, le nez mince dans la face agtie.

A la fin, un garçon le recueillit et le conduisit au docteur, qui lui jeta un coup d'œil, et, furieux, tapa du pied: c'était de la folie! . . . La peste devrait bien étouffer les consuls! . . . On ne pouvait vraiment pas accepter ce malade.

Mais le visage du matelot se contracta sous un si poignant désespoir que le médecin se radoucít pour l'in-terroger.

"Ce sont des dames . . . une demoiselle . . . des passagères, qui m'ont fait donner un billet. . . ."

Surpris de cette intervention, l'offi-cier lui ordonnait d'attendre.

"Mon garçon, dit-il en revenant, tu as de la chance que la duchesse et sa fille se soient intéressées à toi! . . . Il n'y a pas de bon sens de ren-voyer de l'hôpital un pareil invalide, et de l'embarquer! . . . Enfin! Tu es passager de pont; mais, grâce à ces dames, on va te mettre aux troisièmes . . ."

Bastiani balbutia un merci! Il avait levé les yeux vers la porte, comme espérant que sa bienfaitrice allait appa-raître derrière le docteur. Alors, elle était fille d'une duchesse? Cette grandeur révélée en lui laissait pas d'étonnement. Une honte plutôt, un vague regret de ses regards la veille.

Lorsque, après s'être installé, il remonta sur le pont, le navire frémissait. Des passagers envoyaient des adieux aux gens tassés sur l'appontement. D'autres, au bord opposé, jetaient des sous à des petits plongeurs. Le marin découvrit dans la foule, à l'arrière, le casque blanc, le voile bleu de la jeune fille, et, malgré lui, sans savoir, fit quelques pas le long du pavillon de la boulangerie et des claire-voies de la machine.

"Demi-tour, l'homme!" gronda un maître.

Le Corse s'arrêta net, paralysé. Le casque blanc, le voile bleu disparaurent, noyés dans les groupes, loin, très loin de lui. Et stupidement, il se rappela qu'il ne pouvait dépasser la moitié du pont. Au moment, il se sentit défaillir comme la veille, sous le soleil, et il demeura prostré, essayant d'épeler l'écriteau fixé à la corniche du fumoir :

.....
 LIMITE DES PASSAGERS

DE 3^E CLASSE.

Dans son animalité malade, il s'abîmait, cloué là par une force inconnue, incapable de penser puisqu'il était incapable d'efforts, et le cerveau anémié comme ses muscles.

Il songeait bien que son espoir de retrouver sa bienfaitrice, de l'entendre, de lui parler avait été fou; mais ce souhait revenait, en dessous. C'était une curiosité, une envie, dont il n'était pas maître, vague avec cela et sans que s'y précisât la moindre de ses anciennes ardeurs de mâle. Et il se reprochait de ne l'avoir pas assez remerciée la veille; maintenant, il n'oserait plus.

Lentement, il s'en retourna pour s'asseoir à l'avant, près des boxes où se serrait le bétail. Au dessus, un amoncellement de cages emprisonnait des centaines de singes et de perroquets. Autour, de tous côtés, d'innombrables boîtes grillées, plus petites, retenaient un peuple d'oiseaux multicolores et babillards.

C'est là qu'il mit la chaise-longue de

bambou que lui envoya la jeune fille dans l'après-midi.

Sur cette chaise, il passa désormais tout son temps, pris d'un ravissement confus à l'idée qu'elle avait pu s'y coucher jadis.

Etendu sur les souples cambrures de rotin il revivait ses misères, et les mois, les mois si longs de sa campagne depuis le départ de L'Immaculée Conception de Marseilles, jusqu'à l'incendie du voilier dans le détroit de Malacca.

"Ah, ça avait été une chose terrible . . . leur navire tout a coup en feu . . . un peu plus on l'aurait grillé dans son hamac, lui . . . car il était déjà malade, malade . . . crachant le sang."

Puis il revivait longuement, la sensation de bonheur que lui avait donné la pitié de la jolie jeune fille à peine entrevue.

Il ruminait des choses en son cœur simple, songeait qu'elle était belle, qu'elle était femme, . . . n'allait pas plus loin, sans forces et sous le mal redevenu pareil à un petit enfant.

"Si elle venait s'informer de moi," chuchotait-il l'âme troublée.

III

La voix de la jeune fille était douce, surnaturelle. Il se rappelait cette voix plus que le visage, et se répétant les mots qu'elle avait dits, il cherchait à imiter son accent. Oh! la réentendre! . . . Mais, non, c'était fini; il n'aurait plus cette musique!

Il se tordit les mains, rêvait de se lever, de repousser le second-maître, et d'aller là-bas pour la revoir, et crever après.

Un jour, il eut une grande joie: il retrouvait le nom de Diane. Sa mère l'avait appelée Diane, il s'en souvenait, à présent. Le joli nom! . . . Il ne le comprenait pas, s'imaginait que la jeune fille était étrangère, mais il jouissait béatement à caresser les syllabes chantantes.

Le gloussement de l'eau sur les flancs du *Djemnah*, le ron-ron as-

sourdi de l'hélice berçaient son hébétude d'amour.

* *

Des semaines passèrent encore. Il faiblissait davantage, et ses désirs croissaient, dont il ne rougissait plus, rêvant nuit et jour des lèvres de cette vierge.

Tous les matins, le docteur entraît dans sa cabine, mais déjà levé, le Corse avait, au bras d'un garçon, regagné le pont et son fauteuil: Si elle venait?

On ne l'auscultait plus. A quoi bon? Le médecin apportait des cordiaux simplement, des toniques, des flacons de couleur, des drogues amères que le poitrinaire reniflait à chaque instant pour ne plus sentir l'odeur des bêtes.

Ensuite, il restait seul, prenant ses repas sur ses genoux, regardait sans voir les chauffeurs arabes s'accroupir à leur prière, et sur la passerelle l'officier de quart aller et venir, faisant des observations, promenant sa lorgnette sur la mer, ou écrivant des choses sur un carnet, au seuil du kiosque de timonerie.

Et il comptait les heures, d'après les chances qu'il avait de voir Diane arriver, la tombée de l'ombre l'écrasant en renvoyant ses espoirs à l'éternel demain.

A cet instant, le garçon Corse, son pays, venait causer avec lui, dans sa langue, lui dire ce qu'elle avait fait dans le jour.

"Elle était assise près du commandant, à table; elle riait. . . ."

Ces choses mettaient de la fièvre au sang du marin.

Ensuite, son ami l'aidait à monter sur le gaillard, à s'étendre sur les rouleaux de corde, et là, Pierre se taisait, perdu dans la pourpre noyade du soleil, à l'horizon orangé, ou guettant dans le verdissement de l'Est la première des étoiles.

Le *Djennah* roulait doucement, avec ses fanaux vert et rouge, des yeux de borgne que grossissait la nuit épaissie. Un vent frais soufflait par minutes, et la mer semblait dormir, phosphorescente, le long du bord, ou

s'écaillant d'argent, au large, sous la pluie des astres.

* *

Qui savait? Elle viendrait peut-être encore, tout de même. Des passagers avides d'air montaient bien là pour se baigner dans la brise, ou pour écouter les chansons de l'équipage! Mais la jeune fille avait sans doute peur des matelots. La mélancolie monotone de leurs chants endolorissait Bastiani davantage.

* *

Aux escales, il souffrait un peu plus. La passerelle était déserte, le vent tombé, le pont sans bruit, et l'odeur chaude de la terre, les souffles forts des marrées, du santal et des herbes étranges, redoublaient son martyre. Oh était la demoiselle à cette heure? Voilà! S'il avait recouvré ses forces, il serait descendu, lui aussi! Là-bas, sur le sol ferme, il n'y avait point d'écriteaux, de limites, et il l'aurait suivie de loin, si se serait rempli les yeux d'elle, pour les longs jours. Son cœur crevait.

* *

Un matin, il vit la duchesse derrière le docteur et, dans une supplication muette, il la fixa, prêt à lui dire son vœu, sa folie, et toujours retenu, avec des balbutiements inintelligibles d'aphasique. Le médecin et la passagère se regardèrent, lui murmurèrent des douceurs banales et, ses visiteurs partis, il attendit plus fort, dans une résurrection de vie.

Pour sûr, la mère allait parler à sa fille, la ramènerait. Il eut la force de se lever, de descendre seul, de mettre ses effets du dimanche, puis il la guetta furieusement, le livre qu'elle lui avait envoyé étalé devant lui, le livre qu'il ne savait pas lire.

Ce fut une femme de chambre qui parut. Elle portait une assiette de fruits.

"De la part de mademoiselle. . . ."
Et elle s'en alla.

Il eut un cri, un seul, et retomba terrassé, comme mort.

C'était fini; elle ne viendrait jamais, jamais, puisqu'elle ne venait pas, le sachant si malade! Dans sa poitrine, dans sa tête, quelque chose s'était cassée. Longtemps il pleura, mouillant de ses larmes les mangoustans, les letchis, les bananes, les oranges. Des singes attirés par le parfum passaient leurs pattes à travers les barreaux, tiraient sa manche.

Le soir, dans sa cabine, il frissonna d'un accès de fièvre qui lui rendit ses forces et le transfigura.

Et il aima plus fort, avec une passion enfin consciente. Il se traîna jusqu'à l'extrémité du couloir du côté des premières. A travers une porte laissée ouverte lui arrivait le son du piano. Elle chantait. Il la vit en son rêve, il la vit belle, en robe de fête, des fleurs dans les cheveux, entourée d'amour. . . . Et désespérément, à bout de sanglots, revint s'abattre sur son lit, agonisant dans l'oreiller avec des baisers et des morsures.

Le lendemain, il ne put se lever, brisé, retrouvant dans sa migraine le souvenir d'avoir déliré toute la nuit. Le docteur parut:

"Monsieur le médecin," lui demanda-t-il l'air égaré, "quand on jette un mort à la mer, tous les passagers viennent bien, n'est-ce-pas? tous?"

Il fallut qu'à bout de consolations, de câlineries, de douceurs, le docteur répondit "oui" pour qu'il se calmât. Et pendant deux jours, dans ses délires comme dans ses repos, il ne cessa de répéter:

"Elle viendra! . . . elle viendra! . . ."

Il mourut ce cri aux lèvres.

Un peu plus tard le médecin du bord, recouvrant du drap le cadavre,

dit au second lieutenant qui était venu pour les constatations officielles:

"Dommage tout de même c'était un beau garçon. Ces Corses ont souvent de la race."

IV

A LA coupée des troisièmes, dans l'entre-pont on avait ouvert à deux battants la porte-fenêtre de tôle par laquelle Bastiani, vingt jours avant, était entré. L'escalier relevé et amarré plus haut, contre le bastingage, rien ne masquait la baie rectangulaire, et l'on voyait courir la moire phosphorescente et molle de la mer.

Le cercueil sortit de la cabine, glissa sur des rouleaux, s'arrêta devant la trou, et le charpentier l'envelopa d'un pavillon tricolore. Les hommes se rangèrent de chaque côté; un garçon apporta quatre flambeaux du salon, en encadra la bière.

Par la porte-fenêtre, un souffle frais entraînait avec les chuchotements de l'eau froissée.

Les passagers arrivaient, et la duchesse, et sa fille. Ils se pressaient dans l'étroit couloir de la batterie, perpendiculairement à la coupée.

Les premiers seuls voyaient la bière que cachaient trois religieuses à genoux, le commandant debout et un missionnaire franciscain en costume chinois. Un boy tenait le seau d'eau bénite.

Le moine ouvrit son bréviaire, tout le monde s'agenouilla, sauf le capitaine qui se tourna vers un matelot:

"La machine à 40 tours. . . ."

Le matelot partit faire exécuter l'ordre, et le *Djemnah*, presque aussitôt, sembla ne plus marcher.

L'eau riait très distinctement; son rire avait des intermittences, des pouffades en fusées.

"*De profundis, clamavi ad te, Domine.*"

Les sœurs envoyaient les réponses avec des voix blanches, tranquilles. La flamme des flambeaux vacillait; des ombres dansaient au mur, grimpaient sous les ailes des coiffes

blanches, éteignaient brèvement l'éclat cuivré des crucifix sur les guipes.

"In nomine Patris, Filii et Spiritus Sancti. Amen."

Le prêtre aspergeait le cercueil à coups de goupillon; son geste, chaque fois, faisait soubresauter comme un serpent, sur la blancheur de son surplis, sa fausse queue chinoise. Bientôt, sous l'étamine mouillée, maintenant transparente, le bois de la bière se distingua; on s'était servi de planches de caisses remplies d'inscriptions commerciales aux grosses lettres:

CRAINT L'HUMIDITÉ—FRAGILE

Tout le monde se levait:

"En douceur, les enfants!" commanda le second-maître.

Les hommes se penchèrent. Ils poussaient des "han" comme à la manœuvre.

"Hardi donc! . . . Mollisez pas! . . . Soulage!"

Le cercueil maintenant affleurait l'abîme. Il glissa, glissa, glissa, retenu en bascule sur un seul rouleau.

Le maître porta à ses lèvres son sifflet d'argent, rendit les honneurs, et dans la musique de ce susurrement, la bière disparut.

On entendit un pouf mouillé; des jaillissures entrèrent, puis l'eau reprit ses rires et sa moire n'eut plus un pli.

"Machine en route!" ordonna le commandant. De nouveau le timonier partit faire exécuter l'ordre.

Les passagers s'éloignèrent remplissant les couloirs de causeries. La duchesse disait à sa fille:

"Sur un navire de l'État, il n'aurait pas eu de cercueil. . . ."

"Je suis bien contente," répondit Diane, "de n'avoir rien vu. J'en aurais rêvé. . . . C'est si triste!"



THE FEAR OF LOVE

OH, take me into the still places of your heart,
And hide me under the night of your deep hair;
For the fear of love is upon me;
I am afraid lest God should discover the wonderfulness of our love.

Shall I find life but to lose it?
Shall I stretch out my hands at last to joy,
And take but the irremediable anguish?
For the cost of heaven is the fear of hell;
The terrible cost of love
Is the fear to be cast out therefrom.

Oh, touch me! Oh, look upon me!
Look upon my spirit with your eyes,
And touch me with the benediction of your hands!
Breathe upon me, breathe upon me,
And my soul shall live.
Kiss me with your mouth upon my mouth,
And I shall be strong.

CHARLES G. D. ROBERTS.

A PAGAN DIVERSION

By Algernon Tassin

IT was apparently of no consequence to Nancy Farwell that the hotel gossips believed Jack's engagement to Sadie Williams would be announced before the end of the Summer. They spoke about it on the porches; principally at the north end, which had the lake view and was called the "hammock parlor" in the hotel book. She laughingly joined in. "Of course," she nodded, "Williams is an awful heart-smasher. I don't blame her for wanting him. He's just splendid!"

When she had gone, some of the girls said: "Well, she takes it gracefully enough, at any rate." And the rest said: "Oh! I think she got over it finely. I don't believe she cares for him at all now."

Nancy came back, laughing. "Girls," she whispered, excitedly, "here they come! Let's leave them the parlor and the moon over there. One good turn deserves another."

The girls crowded out pell-mell. They filed soberly past the conscious couple on the steps. "Have you seen the moon rise?" called Nancy. "It's perfectly grand and poetic!"

She slipped away from the rest of the girls in a few moments and went out to the bench by the tennis court. The moon whitened her blue gown and the breeze fluffed her hair. She felt picturesque. Though she had come out to think undisturbed, she remembered that she could be seen from the hammock parlor, and was not sorry. She set herself to overhauling accounts. "The fact of the matter is simply this," she summed up, finally; "Jack is the kind of man who could love any one of a half-dozen girls. It doesn't matter which one, to him, but it does to me. I'm going to be the one." She looked toward the hammock. "I

wonder how much Sadie cares for him? She's a sweet girl. And she's got a good deal of headway in two weeks. Of course, he must be manipulated. Any little incident will drive him either way. Something simply must happen. I'm not going to sit round and wait. I must create a diversion in my favor. My, how beautiful the night is! I'm going for a paddle."

She went down to the boathouse and over the long landing. Her canoe lay on the edge of the float where she had left it in the afternoon—she was late for dinner, and no men were about. She shoved it off into the water, which sparkled like glass in the moon track.

Nancy was intoxicated with the glittering stir the canoe made as it slipped in. She laughed gaily and clasped her hands in frank childishness. "I will paddle right up that track," she said, "to the jumping-off place."

The lake was as still as the night, and both were unreally beautiful. She paddled away, singing. Occasionally she stopped to talk aloud. She liked to hear herself talk; it was all of a piece with her enjoyment of herself. "'On such a night,'" she quoted—"I don't remember the rest, but it just fits in." She threw a handful of water into the moon. "I have a great mind for a bath," she said. "It would be splendidly pagan. I'm all alone in the whole world. Nonsense, you improper thing!" She grew reckless as she lingered on the idea. "I suppose it's the moon," she went on. "It *would* be glorious. Nancy Farwell, are you an entity or a creature of prejudice? Cast off your shackles and taste the unpardonable sin." She had untied one of her white shoes and thumped it into the boat. "I don't

care," she cried, defiantly. "For once I'll make an absolute and perfect bolt. I am the spirit of the times—and everybody is two miles away, in bed."

She had hesitated and she was lost. The other white shoe went off with a thump. She completed her preparations in a frenzy. She grasped the two sides of the canoe firmly; one lithe swing from the supple upper arms while she held the wrists stiffly to keep the shock from the canoe, and she lifted herself neatly out, curving into the water like a white flash. The canoe bounded buoyantly back.

Now that she had taken the irrevocable plunge, Nancy gave herself up unrestrainedly to wickedness. The water was deliciously soft; she understood all at once the demoralization of freedom. It was a full half-hour before she thrust up two shining arms and swung herself back into the canoe, springing as deftly as before. She felt instinct with life; her flesh tingled, her blood leaped. She could not but admire her own agility as she felt the easy and perfect play of muscles. She laughed to herself. "I think even Pierre would have called that neatly done," she said, approvingly.

She began reluctantly to dress. "I must be a savage by nature," she mused. "Anyway, it was glorious!" She took up her paddle. "Farewell!" she said, tragically; "farewell, sweet and scandalous emancipation! I paddle back into the nineteenth century."

She turned resolutely against the moon and worked her blade rapidly for a few minutes. Suddenly, right in front of her, like a black arrow in the silver path came shooting another canoe. She gasped, terror-stricken. Horror! who could be in it? No woman, surely, at this outrageous hour. Could he have seen? Certainly not! but the mere thought was enormous. What was she to do? There was no way to escape. All at once it seemed a frightful thing that she should be out alone at the dead of night. It was impossible to pass by unnoticed. Besides, why should she

make the escapade appear clandestine? There was nothing to be ashamed of—of course not, if only——!

The canoes shot toward each other. The occupant of the other one was a man. The moon brought him out blindly black in relief—in a moment they were passing each other. It was Jack!

She must be easy, at all hazards. She could feel how wet her hair lay in its heavy coil. She took the bull by the horns. She hailed him jauntily. "It's pretty late for you. Does your chaperon know you're out?"

Jack poised his paddle as he swerved his canoe round. "Does yours?" he asked, impudently.

"No," said Nancy. "No one does but you. This is a bolt."

"I won't tell," said he.

"Thanks!" she returned, lightly. "Now go on out—anywhere. And don't come back for an hour."

He hesitated provokingly. "Why?" he asked.

"Stupid! Do you suppose I'm going to be seen returning with you at this time of night? Oh! how am I ever going to get in, anyway?"

"I don't know," said Jack, coolly. "You might paddle round till morning. I'll keep you company."

Nancy was dumb with sudden realization; her sin was shutting in on her with all its awful consequences. She felt flooded; but she reached out instinctively to keep her equilibrium. In default of anything better to do she laughed. She was determined not to show her embarrassment.

"Well," she said, "this is a situation, at all events! What are you going to do about it?"

"I?" said Jack, drawlingly. "Why, this isn't any of my affair."

Nancy was furious. She had time, however, to think that she had never seen him quite so splendid as now. He was in his rowing shirt; the muscles rippled along his bare shoulders. He was smiling in mock derision. She knew he was waiting for her to cave in. "This is certainly a diversion," she thought, grimly, "ready made to my hand; it would

be a pity not to profit by it." At the thought her daring returned. She would show him that she was mistress of the occasion—to his discomfiture, too. But how? That was the question. She felt a little trickle of water down her neck. Had he noticed how wet her hair was? They were paddling slowly; she dropped a little behind. Thank heaven, anyway, that her hair curled prettily with moisture—it was not hanging limp on her forehead like seaweed.

"Of course," ventured Nancy, "this comes as a sweet surprise to you. You had no idea that I was out here?"

"Oh, yes," drawled Jack, "I saw you go out. I followed you as soon as—"

Nancy's heart gave a jump, but she determined to die game. She filled up the gap. "As soon as you got Sadie off to bed?"

Jack laughed; his laughter had no special meaning, but it seemed significant to her and filled her with a wild determination to get even with him.

They were almost turning into the channel, but still a mile from the hotel. On the harbor side of the little cape there were wide flats covered with nine feet of water at high tide; at low water the channel wriggled through like an escaping snake. It was marked by bushes lashed to stakes; when the tide was out they looked ridiculously like last year's Christmas trees. Now they were three feet above the surface.

A sudden idea struck her. "Do you know what I came out for?" she asked.

Jack laughed again. How much *did* the brute know, after all? "I suppose you came out for a paddle," he said, "and to quiet your jaded nerves. It's very peaceful."

"Yes," assented Nancy, cheerfully. "Then, too, I wanted to get my handkerchief. I tied it on the outside bush this afternoon in the race. It wasn't out of water yet, so I paddled on to wait for the tide to go down."

When Nancy made up her mind to lie, she did it consistently; there was

no hitch in the proceeding. The two canoes had come to the first bush. "How provoking!" she exclaimed. "The tide is not low enough yet. That was my graduation handkerchief, too; I would not lose it for the world. How could I ever have been so careless as to tie it there? It must be a foot further down, and I simply can't stay here any longer."

Jack's gallantry could always be relied on. "I'll get it for you," he said.

She turned away to hide a vicious smile. "Oh, will you? How good of you!" she said, joyfully. "You can easily find it. I'm quite sure I tied it tight enough."

Jack swung his canoe round. He fished in the water near the bush. Nancy, as was natural, swung alongside to show him the exact spot. She leaned partly over. Suddenly she gave a little scream and caught as if to save her balance. Jack, leaning over and off his guard, shot headlong into the water.

He came up sputtering. Nancy was laughing hysterically.

"I'm all right!" cried Jack. "Don't be frightened! I might as well find your handkerchief while I'm in." He fumbled over the bush. "It isn't here," he said.

"Dear me!" said Nancy. "The water must have washed it away. Isn't that maddening, after all this fuss? Thank you ever so much for looking. Can you get back into your canoe?" she asked, complacently. She scented victory. "It's a rather hard thing to do, isn't it?"

Jack saw approaching ignominy; he had been trying the trick for a week. Do what he could, the canoe bounced away from him or overturned. He sputtered savagely.

"You place your arms so," directed Nancy, with calm interest, "then spring with the weight on the outside one. Pierre showed me how up on the north lake."

Jack splashed wildly; the canoe was as elusive as a greased pig.

"Oh, look out!" screamed Nancy. "I'll steady your canoe between mine and the bush."

But Jack only bobbed the three in a crazy way.

"It's no use," decided Nancy. "You can't do it; and you'll tip me over in a minute. Then we *should* be in a pickle." She hesitated carefully. "What are you going to do about it? It isn't any of my affair, you know."

Jack grunted; he felt like thrashing somebody. He attacked the water with more vigor.

Nancy went on. "This is getting perfectly scandalous; it must be nearly two o'clock. Shall I tow your canoe in, or do you want it to practice on? It only takes time after you know how; you might get the knack of it all at once. The tide will be low enough for you to wade in by five. You never can swim all that way—unless you swim from bush to bush." She laughed. "Forgive me," she said, demurely, "I didn't mean to." She paused again. "Indeed, I must go."

"Look here," said Jack, meekly—his spirit was broken—"how many of the girls are you going to let into this in confidence? I won't tell if you don't."

"Won't tell what?" said Nancy, belligerently. She wanted it distinctly understood that she was granting a favor, not making a bargain. All the same, she was anxious for what came next.

"Oh, nothing," said Jack. "Did I splash you so?" he asked, irrelevantly. "How wet your hair is!"

"No," assented Nancy, quickly, "of course, I won't tell a soul." She took up her paddle. "I hate to leave you here alone. You might get a cramp. I'll tow you in if you want me to."

"Oh, shut up!" said Jack. To be towed in by a girl at two in the morning! "Look here, Nancy—" he began.

"I beg your pardon," she interrupted, sweetly.

"Oh, well," said Jack. "What's the use? I've thrown away two weeks, and—"

"If you think I'm going to carry on a normal conversation with you under these circumstances," said

Nancy, "you are very much mistaken. Do you, or do you not, want to be towed in?"

There was a minute's silence. "Tow me in," said Jack. He was utterly subdued.

If anyone had been stirring at such an hour in the morning he might have seen a queer naval procession in the wake of a full moon. First came Nancy, paddling slowly; behind her, an empty canoe, which sagged slightly, and behind that—! Then he might have seen two figures moving on the float.

"You can sneak in," said Jack, "just as the barge goes for the three o'clock train."

"Oh, Jack," said Nancy. "This is perfectly awful. I feel like a criminal."

"Never mind," said Jack, soothingly. He came nearer, deliberately. "Nancy, I'll never tell," he said, solemnly.

"Oh, Jack!" she cried, with a little muffled scream. "How dare you? You're soaking wet, too!"

"Never mind," said Jack again; "so is your hair."

Nancy had fled.

She came down to breakfast more radiant than ever. "Good-morning, girls," she said. "Good-morning, Sadie. Wasn't the moon lovely last night?"

"Yes," said Sadie, "it was fine. I watched it from my window for a long time."

"You did?" asked Nancy, with interest. "How long?"

"Until after three o'clock," answered Sadie.

Nancy took the bull by the horns; she knew Sadie could not see the boathouse from her window. "Then you must have seen me come in," she said. "Girls, don't you ever breathe a word. The moon was so perfectly fine last night I couldn't bear to go to bed. So I went out paddling."

"Oh," chorused the girls, "until that time in the morning? Did anything happen?"

"Yes," said Nancy, mysteriously, "I created quite a diversion."

THE ENCHANTRESS

NAY, do not smile. I know too well
Just where that luring trick was learned—
The source of the consuming spell
That all my better being burned,
And never more that cruel flame
May wrap my spirit in its fold;
Your sweetest wiles but rouse my shame,
And leave me sad, and sick, and cold.

'Twas not in any modish glass
You learned so deftly to enthrall,
But in a disk of burnished brass
Found by an old Corinthian wall;
A mirror with such magic wrought,
It prompts, not shows, the lavish grace;
From its enwoven charm you caught
The smile that lights your perfect face.

'Twas fashioned in alchemic fire
For proud hetairai of a time
When man's unbridled, rash desire
Was not accounted aught of crime;
And fair Aspasia's placid brow
And Phryne's flexile grace revealed
Upon your plastic beauty, now
With strange enchantment it has sealed.

Before it Laïs long ago
Rehearsed the follies of her art,
And those bewildering smiles that show
How love is won without a heart.
So smile no more like Laïs. . . . Yet
I love you in the face of doom!
Ah, smile again, and I'll forget
The tigress sculptured on her tomb.

ROBERTSON FORBES.



SIZE NO ADVANTAGE

MARCIA (*sighing*)—How little men understand women!
SHORTLEIGH (*bitterly*)—They don't understand them any better than
big ones.

WHEN MYRTLE COMES TO TOWN

WHEN Myrtle comes to town, 'tis then
 I bid a quick farewell
 To idle haunts of idle men,
 And yield to Beauty's spell;
 And day or night—'tis e'er the same—
 Through Gotham up and down
 I'm squire to just the fairest dame
 That ever came to town!

When Myrtle comes to town she brings
 A fragrance freshly sweet
 Of perfumed hill and mead that clings
 About her garments neat.
 And lo, from Fordham's rugged height
 To Bowling Green adown,
 Mine is a service of delight
 When Myrtle comes to town.

When Myrtle comes to town, no more
 I'm seen at club or ball,
 But all such follies loud deplore—
 And haunt the lecture hall.
 And as we speed serenely by
 I nod with chilling frown
 To chaps who bow and envy me
 When Myrtle comes to town!

When Myrtle comes to town she owns
 "A cousin's rather nice;"
 And I, in far more eager tones,
 Endorse it in a trice.
 And though on knowledge too intent
 To heed a word I say,
 I fondly hope she'll soon consent
 To come to town to stay!

RICHARD STILLMAN POWELL.



A BAD BREAK

SHE—How did he come to marry a widow?
 HE—She asked him why he didn't marry, and he thoughtlessly replied
 that he didn't have to.

THE WORLD WELL LOST—IN WALES

By Percival Pollard

AMERICANS, whether of the class that makes Newport and Narragansett Pier emblems of luxury to the multitude or of the humbler sort that disports itself at Atlantic City and places of that ilk, have a consuming interest in anything that spells itself Summer resort. Perhaps there is no nation in the world that so systematically tries to fly the cities during the dog days. It is true that the Englishman revels largely in Saturday-to-Monday excursions, and that the European of the Continent manages to over-eat and over-drink sufficiently during the Winter to necessitate a "cure" at some watering place in the Summer, but as a national habit the fitting to mountain and seashore is nowhere so intensely developed as in America. At home or abroad, the places where you can find no Americans are, indeed, hard to find. You may be in some sequestered nook of Saxon Switzerland or Thüringen, congratulating yourself on an entire change of scene, but the chances are ten to one that before you have been there three hours a party of Americans comes twanging its way into your hearing. There arises, then, to the pessimist, the problem: Where can I escape my own countrymen?

An unpatriotic wish? Distinctly. The voice of a man without a country? Perhaps. And yet—there are people like that. They say to themselves that if they can find some little corner of the world that is not infested by the Cook's tourist, by the American whose inquisitiveness and thirst for information amount to a blot on the landscape, they will taste of comparative happiness.

Well, the other day I was actually in a place like that. There were no Americans there. There was no fashionable function. There was no heat. Just mountains and woods and the sea, and a quaint little village of stone and flower-covered houses. So different was it from the sort of thing we know on this side of the water that I am tempted to try a picture of it. It was in North Wales. I will admit that much. As to the actual name, why should I endanger my chances of ever again finding peace there? Let it suffice that consonants predominated in its spelling, that it rejoiced in double "l's," and that it was not a hundred miles from either Liverpool or Llandudno.

Arrival at this little corner of the Welsh mountains had a charm of its own. The train went puffing out of the station; you stood on the platform regarding your luggage and wondering whether there was by chance a decent inn in the whole place. You may remark that the experienced traveler does not leave a matter of that sort to the last minute; for my part, I have always preferred to journey abroad in the world with Surprise as my courier. In the distance thundered the mail train bound for Holyhead and the Atlantic liners. A gray village showed against the hills; clouds raced along the summits of these hills, hiding them this minute, revealing them the next. Was there a conveyance of any sort to be had? The porter looked amused. He mentioned a hotel, and declared it was only a minute's walk. So I walked over a dusty lane that led past boarding-houses and churches and funny little shops. And pres-

ently I was housed and fed, and my life in this corner of Wales was begun.

Excitement? Not an ounce of it to the landscape. Rest? Heaped up baskets of it! The mountain air pressed sleep heavily on the lids, so that it was fairly in the forenoon before one was ready to view the life and stir of the place. Families were walking down to the sands, with tidy bundles of towels and bathing-suits. Tiny two-wheeled butcher-carts went careering around the curves of the village streets. An occasional bicyclist, with all the needless impediments in which Englishmen rejoice, in the way of brakes, mud-guards and what not, went toiling up the steepness. On the sands there was some faint attempt at gaiety. The shore was dotted with the cumbersome bathing-machines that this part of the world chooses to use. They are like little moving-vans on decrepit wheels. You climb into one of these dreadful contrivances, undress and proceed to swim out into the chill Irish Sea; presently, when you are tired and reach the machine again, you begin to discover the reasons for its existence. The tide has risen so that between you and dry land there are now a dozen yards or so. An ancient drudge of a horse is hitched to your vehicle and you are pulled high and dry once more, to reflect upon the fact that if there be one thing in equine life more degrading than pulling a street-car it must be the shifting about of bathing-machines. In the meanwhile, on the sands behind you, children have been pantomiming the despair of life by building castles in the sand—castles that the tide, like fate, destroys with the most ruthless carelessness. Governesses are sitting on benches, reading. Families sit in groups. There do not appear to be any young men and maidens on flirtation intent. Indeed, without any malice, temptation is the last thing you can find here. The women are, by any French or American standard of dress, utterly impossible, and the men are evidently aiming only at com-

fort. In walking, the girls wear their skirts very high, and in wheeling they hardly show their toes. There is no theatre, no casino, no gambling.

There are, however, the sand-shows. There are the minstrels, and the Pierrots, and the local band. The minstrels are black-faced fellows who strum banjos and sing music hall melodies, and attempt the humor of the old-time end-men. The Pierrots are merely wandering "variety artists" in the conventional costumes. The hat begins to circulate, while the crowd thins, and you wonder whether the poor wretches will ever accumulate enough to get out of the village. Some morning you are awakened by a noise of humming and strumming under your window; the Christy Minstrels are still there; later you see them passing down the village street, and you note that the shopkeepers watch them with keen suspicion. How many hundred dollars a week is it, if you please, that Chevalier and Guilbert make? So; but there is another side to the picture, and one that young persons ambitious for the laurels of the music hall should see as vividly, and that is the misery of being a wandering minstrel for the entertainment of the sojourners in a corner of the Welsh mountains.

Walking up to the mountains takes you through the village. Such a nest of a place! Each cottage, no matter how tiny, shows an interior of the utmost cleanliness; walls decorated with fine old family china; furniture that seems as old as the sea itself; around each outer wall clamber roses and vines and flowering creepers. The stone floor is polished until it shines. The place appears never to have known the cynic jest: "It is cheaper to move than to pay rent." These people seem to be living where they and their forbears have lived since the beginning of time, and all their belongings wear the look of things immovable, immutable. This lack of change rings through everything here. The Welsh language still holds sway over this bit of earth. When English is attempted it is with quaint

hissing *s's* and curious turns of phrase.

Late in the afternoon a coach halts in the village. It has come in from a circular daily tour, visiting the better known tourist-ridden places, such as Bettws-y-Coed and Conway. Up and down the steep hills go the four horses, and the sound of the horn blows strong in the wind. It is a glorious vestige of the old cross-country coaching days. Now you are up in the clouds, seeing clouds and hills and valleys at your feet; now you skirt the seas; now you are in the shadow of castle walls that have seen the day of Rome and the time of the Cæsars. At the end of the drive you have an appetite for food and sleep such as no doctor in the world could give you.

The outer world seems a thousand miles and a thousand years away. A daily paper comes in from Liverpool, and there are telegrams and letters possible, but the possible seldom becomes the probable in this case. Yet hold! Fashion has tried for a foothold even in this nook of the hills. Considering the place and its people, and the manner of its usual visitors, it seems quite too ridiculous, but the fact remains that in one hotel there is an attempt made to enforce the dispensing with bonnets at meals. Think of it! In a place where the style of the dress would disgrace the Bowery! Good-humored argument of the mat-

ter provokes only the retort that in England this has always been the custom and always will be. Verily, even in Wales one must do as the Welsh!

One other touch of the larger life came to me in this refuge. Before a little tailor's shop stood a poster. A Poster—spell it large, please!—an Italian poster, a collectable poster, an artistic poster, a real thing of beauty, from Milan! Would the old man part with it? Yes, he had a clean one; he was to put up the new one when the present one was too weather-stained; it was of no value to him; a firm in Liverpool had sent them; he might, perhaps— And so I am a poster the richer for my running for rest to Wales.

By now, I dare say the wear and tear of the whirlpool has effaced most of the benefits I acquired, but at the time I assure you that my little Welsh village proved a most efficient cure for ills of both mind and body. There were no gaieties, no diversions. Just the swimming out to sea, the driving about the neighborhood, the walking hillward, the observing of one's fellow men and women, and the quiet—the quiet!

For a song, or for the mere lilting refrain of a song—so it be some faint echo out of happiness—I would part with the name of that nook, but not for a penny less.



AN ANOMALOUS CASE

THOUGH a hitch in the proceedings is unpleasant, as a rule—
The simple little something that occasions a delay—
And it very rarely happens one can take the matter cool,
I chanced upon two oddities that did, the other day.

The little god of Love had long been planning the event;
With winning wiles upon their hearts such sorcery he'd wrought,
Their cup of bliss o'erflowing, to the parsonage they went,
And a hitch in the proceedings was exactly what they sought.

R. F. G.

IN THE AUTOMOBILE

I take my sweet for a quiet ride
 In an automobile for two,
 And on through the lonely lanes we glide,
 As lovers are prone to do.
 No lines to bother, no horse to fret
 And lessen the evening's zest;
 The lever, obedient, stays where set—
 And we can perform the rest.

In case our vehicle snug should balk
 When far from our home we are,
 Don't think we'd have to get out and walk,
 Or wait for a cable-car;
 Her lips on mine in a long, long kiss,
 And no one near to tell,
 Would thrill me so with electric bliss,
 'Twould start the machine as well!

EDWIN L. SABIN.



IMPRESSIONISTIC

"THE sky was as bright and beautiful as the great emerald in the Czar's diadem——"
 "But, my dear, emeralds are green——"
 "—in the foreground an opalescent brook threaded its way——"
 "Nonsense! Brooks are never opalescent——"
 "—beneath the shade of a pink tree a green cow stood contentedly chewing her——"
 "Tobacco?"
 "How do you expect I can read when you interrupt me every minute?"
 "Well, what sort of nonsense story are you trying to write, anyway?"
 "Why, it's not a story at all, dear, but a description of the prize landscape at the annual exhibition of the Amateur Impressionists' Society."



NO USE TO WORRY

BESSIE—I don't know whether I shall accept Jack Goodcatch or not.
 FLORA—Well, don't worry about it, dear. Jack knows you will.